Whispers in the World, Footprints in the Desert

205 Classic Chinese Zen Koans
with Translation and Commentary

Antón Bousquet

The seed of the Zen tradition was planted in Ancient China by the Indian Buddhist monk Bodhidharma, and then slowly spread throughout the whole of East Asia, before reaching the shores of every continent, inspiring countless people, and offering them a new outlook on themselves and their existence. This tradition distances itself from the scriptures and dogmas that represent the pillars of major religions, including Buddhism itself, and it replaces faith with doubt, showing man the weaknesses of the foundations of the world he inhabits, the set of things surrounding him, and the accumulation of concepts through which he perceives the truth of nature. This world may indeed conceal as much as it reveals. It may enslave as much as it can liberate. This is why the Zen tradition has devised and preserved various means of guiding the inhabitants of this world toward liberation from its yoke, so that they might perceive the truth found beyond all words and concepts, beyond the walls formed by the things of the world. What are known as "koans," or "public cases," represent examples of such guidance.

Koans are short dialogues, statements, or stories that aim to shake their audience to their core, causing men to doubt words, to doubt the world in which they find themselves, and to doubt themselves, a prelude to a form of enlightenment, leading one to see the truth of all things. This book presents the original text of the koans found in three major collections, The Gateless Barrier, The Blue Cliff Record, and The Book of Serenity, accompanied by the traditional Japanese reading (kakikudashi) and an English translation, and a commentary on each case, simply meant to stimulate the imagination of the reader rather than to explain or provide answers to it. This book represents a doorway to the original text, inviting the reader to plunge into this rich tradition and be transformed by these often puzzling texts.

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Antón Bousquet is an independent researcher specializing in the philosophy of language, the philosophy of religion, and comparative cultural studies. He holds a Master's degree in Linguistics from the University of Grenoble III in France and a Ph.D. in Comparative Literature and Intercultural Studies from Fu Jen Catholic University in Taiwan. A former teacher of French as a foreign language, he has worked in various parts of Europe, the Middle East, and Asia.

Printed by:

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205 Classic Chinese Zen Koans with Translation and Commentary

Antón Bousquet

2024-2026

Last Revised: 20261116

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ISBN: 9798339691211 (Paperback)

Printed by:

KOADIG

koadig.wordpress.com

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Introduction

The history of mankind is often written as a long succession of struggles for power, land, riches, or the advancement of knowledge. The march of history is seen as almost always going forward, with man patiently furthering his mastery over nature, extending the reach of his rule over the entire tree of life formed by all the creatures roaming the seas, walking the earth, or flying through the sky. We now live an increasingly comfortable life, enjoying the fruits of the strenuous labor of dozens of generations that have transformed the existence of our kind, from primitive hunter-gatherers sheltered in caves carved by rain and the tremors of the earth to elegantly clothed men proud of their rich heritage, using an extremely vast and rich palette of words to express all the contents of our hearts, and some even freeing themselves from the smothering embrace of our planet, which keeps most things close to its rocky skin, to freely wander through the unfathomable depths of the cosmos, in search of a new world, seeking to sow the seeds of new trees of life in the confines of our universe. The march has indeed been long, and the progress undeniable, but this progress achieved by mankind as a whole nonetheless does not concern all facets of man's existence equally. The whole of mankind may now be more resilient to the deadly whims of nature, that is, the rage of the earth, the attacks of other branches of life, or the fury of the sky, but are the hearts of the men of the present day more at peace or more satisfied than those of our distant ancestors? What is the meaning and goal of this great march of history? When, one day, all the mysteries of nature have been uncovered, and our descendants are free from the exhausting need to strive for their survival, what will they do then? One of the defining characteristics that differentiates man from other branches of life is his capacity to ask such a question, pondering the destiny of life itself, beyond the mere struggle to extend his days on earth and father offspring.

The cave-dwellers who lived before the rise of the first civilization had certainly already reflected on the question of the meaning of their existence, in the same manner as the men who stepped onto the face of the moon, beholding our planet as a distant blue dot in the depths of

space. The progress of man regarding this crucial question is nonetheless far less obvious than progress in technology, the earthly objects that surround us at all times. When one studies the ancient traditions created by men who devoted their entire existence to the liberation of the mind from the anguish and frustrations tied to their earthly and worldly life, whether they come from the East or the West, from kings or beggars, from illiterate barbarians or learned children of ancient civilizations, one is bound to be struck by the relevance of their wisdom to the man of the present era. The vast majority of our neighbors and brethren, including ourselves, are indeed mere infants compared to many of the wise men of yore. Man now focuses his attention on what shines, the technological gadgets that occupy his mind, just as a noisy and blinking toy amuses a babe in its crib; satisfied by the comfort gadgets provide, man has no time left to consider the role they play in his existence or the meaning of his days on earth. The spiritual march of mankind is largely at a standstill, but fortunately, the earth still bears the traces of the footsteps of the ancient ones, and we only have to look down to learn from them.

Among the numerous traditions of the world that are worthy of being investigated and emulated by those seeking to suck the marrow out of life, to unearth and appropriate the most profound nature of our being, the so-called Zen tradition (禪 [chán] in Chinese, 禅 [zen] in Japanese) particularly stands out in the way it offers mankind a spiritual path, a complete way of life, one that neither relies on any form of scripture, holy or not, nor requires belief in a set of dogmas. It demands neither submission to authority, nor blind obedience to teachers. It is not a religion, nor a mere philosophy to be studied and learned. It is rather a path of liberation from the yoke of the delusions afflicting the men of the world, but this liberation does not represent an escape from the world or from one's earthly flesh. On the contrary, it points to the true face of man, revealing his own nature, as a creature made of earth, living inside a world built of innumerable things created by his mind from the oneness of nature, ultimately resting upon no-thing-ness, what being is beyond the frontiers of our world made of countless things, the desert where there is not a single thing but where being shines in all its truth, visible when the mind ceases to arbitrarily carve up the oneness of nature into things. A doorway to this tradition, an entry point found in the world built with words and characters, to lead men beyond its walls of things and into the great desert, can be found in the words of the Indian monk Bodhidharma, considered to have planted the first seed of the Zen tradition in China, which then slowly grew and spread to neighboring empires, and finally reached the shores of the West during the last century:

Not depending on words and characters,

不立文字 [bù lì wén zì]

A special transmission outside the scriptures,

教外別傳 [jiào wài bié chuán]

Pointing directly to man's mind,

直指人心 [zhí zhǐ rén xīn]

Seeing into one's nature and attaining Buddhahood.

見性成佛 [jiàn xìng chéng fó][1]

This tradition, whose name is derived from a Sanskrit word designating contemplation or meditation (dhyāna ध्यान), is remarkable because of its simplicity, and the fact that it not only refrains from exalting scripture and dogmas, but rather encourages one to sow the seeds of doubt in the entire earth, in every part of the world. It is not a spiritual movement or a religion of the world. It is a practice of undermining the rigid foundations of our world, of shattering the frames of our mind, including those of the very religious tradition out of which it arose, Buddhism, so that we may realize that the horizon of our world is not the extent of all that is. A world is not an objective vision of the truth of the earth and the skies, but rather a lens through which we behold the incomprehensible whole of nature, cutting this unicity into a constellation of individual things that can be grasped by our feeble minds, allowing us to manipulate them. These things are nonetheless so familiar and so omnipresent that man has forgotten the fact that they are mere representations. He has grown oblivious to the true nature of all that *is*: the fact that there is no-thing outside the boundaries of his world does not imply that the world is made of illusions or that the sky is empty, but rather means that beyond the limits of man's world, there is only the gigantic, seamless whirlwind formed by the heavens, without any part standing out from the whole, without any instant distinguished from another, only an unfathomable totality, including man himself, who is thus also no-thing-ness itself. When one keeps this true nature in the depths of his heart at all times, he will be able to live a life pervaded by the truth of being, one with the earth, life, the world, and the skies. When he sees the worries and desires afflicting men for what they are —no-thing —they pass right through him, without his grasping them, rendered powerless over him.

One who has seen what lies beyond the great citadel made of the innumerable things of the world nonetheless remembers where he comes from —his previous condition as a slumbering prisoner of its walls, and he thus naturally feels his feet guided toward his brethren who are still slaves to these things, afflicted by the sickness of the man-made city. He

[1] This sentence, often considered to represent the essence of Zen, is found in the "Essay concerning awakening" (悟性論 [wù xìng lùn]), attributed to Bodhidharma.

has transcended the barriers of language and seen the truth that cannot be put into words, and he thus tries to share his vision with others. The ineffability of this truth precludes its teaching, but fortunately, there is another way. No-thing-ness, the great desert beyond the walls of things, cannot be brought inside the world, but one may guide other men to its threshold, pointing out the way to go, whispering between its walls, letting his voice be faintly heard by those calm enough to pay attention to it, a voice calling them to discover the desert found beyond the walls, inside the walls, and within themselves. He may also directly point out the cracks in the rampart of the citadel of things, or expose the weakness of its foundations, leading the observer to realize that there is something beyond it, and something upon which it was built, something that preceded it. His work is to bring man's attention to the essence that lies beyond the representation, and this holds true not only for the world, that is, the sum of all things and concepts created by the mind, but also for the earth, the self, the skies, and no-thing-ness itself. He unveils ways to show what is hidden by the mask of our self, our true face, and he discovers paths to show the sand that is found under the paved streets of the citadel of things, to show that the desert encompasses everything that is. His finger is raised upward and points toward the immensity of the skies, and even though many will still only watch the finger rather than what it points toward, this does not concern him, as he does what he is meant to do. Among similar forms of guidance that arose from the Zen tradition, we find what are commonly known in English as "koans," —a term derived from the Japanese pronunciation of the Chinese word "gōng àn" (公案) meaning "public case."

The concept of "public case" finds its roots in legal terminology, implying that it is a matter that is to be the subject of particular scrutiny, in an open manner, without secrecy, with every one of its aspects visible to all those willing to pay attention to it. In practice, such public cases represent distinctive milestones for the man walking on the path, pieces of man's world in the form of short dialogues, quotes, or statements that are meant to be pondered and become the source of a revelation, rendering the weaknesses and falsehoods of the world manifest, impossible to ignore any longer, and ultimately becoming doorways leading man to peer at the no-thing-ness found beyond it. These cases are often accounts of peculiar encounters, pictures of moments of clarity taken from the daily lives of men devoted to the uncovering of their true nature, like the brief appearance of a beam of sunlight piercing through the clouds and illuminating the earth, inscribed on paper so that they may become beacons for those walking the same path. They escape definition because they are meant to show the deceitful nature of all worldly things, especially words and characters. If one thinks that he understands a public case, or even that he understands the very concept of "public case," he shows that he has strayed from the path. Man thinks that

his mastery over words implies understanding and control over what they represent, but this is a mere delusion caused by their excessive familiarity with them, by the fact that man has been plunged into a sea of things and words since his birth, and has never known anything else. Where there is certainty, the public case sows doubt. Where there is confidence, it brings perplexity. Where there is order, it brings chaos, thereby keeping man on his toes, always on the move, showing him that his world is a fleeting image and that the only thing that is absolutely true is no-thing-ness itself.

Public cases are therefore mere opportunities, rather than teachings. If one believes that there is any answer to them, he is mistaken. This is because answers exist only within the confines of the world of things, and these cases are meant to lead the one pondering them beyond its frontiers, where there are neither words nor things nor understanding nor answers. They recount the subtle ways masters played with their disciples, but they also often play with the reader, the one facing the pages, forcing him to encounter something strange, to doubt himself, to doubt his understanding of the case, and even doubt the reason for its very presence among other cases collected as a book. The mere selection of a case indeed already speaks volumes about it, and it may sometimes serve as bait to catch those who are prone to losing themselves in vain speculations, endlessly roaming vast labyrinths of words and characters, failing to realize that what they are shown is the absurdity of such a quest for meaning. This is one of the great lessons of this tradition: that the search for the meaning and significance of being is a mirage, and that man is meant to venture beyond the frontiers of meaning and meaningfulness. This is where all becomes clear, where there is no meaning to be found, and yet where everything makes perfect sense, the no-thing-ness that represents everything.

The term "public case" nonetheless also implies passing judgment. It may be the judgment of the master who decides whether or not the disciples pondering the case have been able to see through its words and glimpse the no-thing-ness beyond them, or it may be the judgment of the reader, who is tempted to vainly determine its quality, its relevance, its usefulness, or its beauty, thereby revealing that he is still a slave to the world of things, thinking only in terms of oppositions, of "yes" and "no," of "right" and "wrong." Each word uttered in reaction to a case, even each gesture or facial expression, displays one's relationship with the world, and therein lies its remarkable power. It thus takes courage to decide to play the game offered by public cases, not only reading them but letting one's reactions to them be scrutinized by someone more skilled or more experienced on the path than oneself, a master of the way of the sky. It represents a first step, a humbling of one's self, a prelude to the lifting of the mask covering one's face, preventing us from seeing our true nature,

forgetting the “I” to rejoice in the “we,” the whole of being.

One may spend a lifetime contemplating a single public case, or may navigate through numerous ones, letting them fleetingly pass through his mind. The result may be the same, and for a very simple reason: they all point toward the same destination. They are mere doorways to no-thing-ness, only differing in their surroundings, but this profusion is nonetheless far from superfluous. Men indeed occupy various parts of the world, and each reacts in a unique manner to the countless things found in it. Not everyone has the power to pass through every doorway out of the world of things. This is why they come in various shapes, colors, and styles, offering each man as many opportunities to see the wonder beyond his thresholds, as many whispers resonating between the walls of different parts of the citadel of things, at various times of the day, the month, and the year. Some among those hearing these whispers will immediately find the way to the desert within themselves. Others will remain prisoners of the world until their last breath. Yet all share the same nature, and even though some may be blind to it, they remain part of the same whole as all the others, one with them, their worries and fears mere illusions, their feet firmly anchored in the sand of the great desert under an all-encompassing starry sky.

This book represents a comprehensive compendium of public cases, gathering the three main collections of cases that were compiled in China in the centuries following the birth of the Zen tradition: the Gateless Barrier (無門關 [wú mén guān]), the Blue Cliff Record (碧巖錄 [bì yán lù]), and the Book of Serenity (從容錄 [cóng róng lù])[2] The order of these cases has also been rearranged to highlight the subtle differences between many cases that may appear similar or redundant, and also to show that such an ordering in itself may speak as much as the cases themselves. The reader is thus invited to discover its distinctive features by himself. The original classical Chinese text[3] of each case is presented with its phonetic reading and notes explaining difficult or rare words and expressions. A Japanese version[4] then follows, which stays as close as possible to the Chinese text, allowing those more

[2]One should note that many of the cases found in the three collections are identical or very similar, explaining why the number of cases in this book is smaller than the total across the three collections. These collections also contain lengthy commentaries on each case, which are not included in the present book. Only the core text of the cases is reproduced here.

[3]The main source texts for the three books were taken from the CBETA electronic repository. The Gateless Barrier: 《禪宗無門關》。(CBETA) ; The Blue Cliff Record: 《佛果圜悟禪師碧巖錄》。(CBETA) ; The Book of Serenity: 《萬松老人評唱天童覺和尚頌古從容庵錄》。(CBETA) ; Punctuation has been added to these texts, and several mistakes and typos have been corrected.

[4]The main sources for the Japanese translations are as follows. The Gateless Barrier and the Blue Cliff Record: 加藤咄堂。《碧巖録大講座》。東京：平凡社, 1939; The Book of Serenity: 神保如天。《從容録通解》。東京：無我山房, 1915。; The furigana pronunciation has often been modernized.

familiar with the Japanese Zen tradition to get closer to the original text without knowledge of the Chinese language. An English translation is then provided, one that reflects the interpretation of the author of the present book, while benefiting from the work of his predecessors, whose translations have been extensively consulted and often followed. Finally, a commentary on each case concludes each chapter. These commentaries are not meant to explain the case, and even less to give answers to the questions they raise, as there are no answers to give, but rather represent meditations inspired by them, reflections representing the author's view on these cases, which may perhaps lead some of the readers to see them in a new light, once they have pondered the cases by themselves.

Following the path traced by the Zen monks of ancient China, from the world to no-thing-ness, passing through each case, which serves as so many milestones upon it, we are invited to see each passing day as an opportunity for an appropriation of the truth of being, seeing it in the most mundane, most seemingly insignificant part of our world. These cases are grindstones upon which we may sharpen our minds. They are fine dust with which we may polish the surface of our eyes, so that we may then see the fissures present all around us, revealing what lies beyond the walls of our world, the great desert encompassing the citadel of things that we have inhabited since birth. Then these cases will no longer be needed, as we will see what they point toward, right before our eyes, as we wake up at the break of dawn. All the clouds hovering over our world will then dissipate, and the greatness of the heavens will appear to us in all its glory. We will no longer see it as a collection of things, but rather as no-thing-ness itself, marvelously carrying the living throughout the seasons and the years, with our world taken in its whirlwind, turning and turning, until we forget who we are, and can feel the way of the sky pervading our bones. The way will seep into the depths of our mind, before we once again recover our memory, as if awakening from the sweetest dream, returning to our daily life, seemingly unchanged, but now finally knowing what we are.

Part I

The Winter of No-thing-ness

When the morning dew turns into frost as it comes into contact with the cold embrace of the wind blowing over the grass, man recognizes the sign of the arrival of winter. All around him, the trees have been stripped of their vibrant garments, emerald turning first into amber, before finally becoming mere dust on the ground. As the nights grow longer and the silvery glow of the moon becomes more prominent in his life than the heavenly fire of the day, he understands that life itself is retreating from his land. The forests are now vast cemeteries filled with wooden graves, monuments to life appearing like so many emaciated hands reaching toward the sky, begging for relief, for warmth and light, so that life may once again rise out of this hardened soil.

The unforgiving lords of the sky now reign over his land. Frost, hail, snow, and darkness are their names. They have patiently conquered this part of the earth, meticulously covering man's world with a sumptuous but deadly garment, a spotless drape of the purest white, shining like diamonds. The myriads things that once irresistibly attracted man's eyes have now disappeared, leaving a remarkably elegant uniformity in their stead. There are no longer any roads or fences, ponds or fields, machines or constructions, only a white expanse extended to the horizon. All the things of the world are still there, but this world now appears empty, devoid of a single thing. The emptiness of the winter thus reveals the nature of no-thing-ness, pervading all, the essence of all that *is*. Covering all things, the blanket of snow descending from the heavens thus reveals what underlies all things, the unicity of being, the very foundation upon which this world was built. By concealing all things, winter reveals the nature of all things, the no-thing-ness at their heart.

As the living fight for food and struggle for warmth, winter offers them the chance to become more acquainted with death. All around, there are withered plants, frozen carcasses being buried in snow, and creatures seeing their fatty garment grow thinner every day, and yet, what appears to be an end to life is also a new beginning. The seeds of a new generation are indeed safely sleeping inside the ground, ignorant of the harshness of the icy storms blowing above them, unscathed by the fierce battles waged on the snowy ground. Likewise plunged into darkness, hiding in his earthly lair while hoping for the glorious return of the reign of the sun, man is also offered a precious opportunity to contemplate the nature of his world veiled in black velvet. Lying on his bed in the dark, perfectly aware of what surrounds him, he is struck by the realization that what now appears as a single thing is divided only by the light of day passing through his eyes, awakening his mind. It is as if he stood outside in the snow, and let himself be buried by it, letting his own being be revealed as one with all that *is*. He may cut off his arm as if he were snapping a branch, and it would not matter, as he knows that all is no-thing-ness, and that things are mere illusions

born out of his fertile mind. He thus learns from the barren landscape as much as from the luxuriant one. He is a polar bear lying down on the ice, largely indistinguishable from it. There is no longer life or death, clarity or obscurity; only a vision of what being is when there is no longer any thing in man's eyes.

The desolate, snowy expanse where no-thing can be discerned is both the beginning and the end. It is the starting point and the destination, the birthplace and the grave. It is the simplest of all, and yet also the hardest to comprehend. Fortunately, our forefathers have uncovered ways of guiding us to no-thing-ness, signs that are like the winter snowfalls enshrouding the world of things, veiling all things, revealing what no-thing-ness is. Exposed to the public eye and ear, these stories and signs represent a doorway to the white desert, a whisper of invitation echoing throughout the world of things, but one that may nonetheless expose the public to judgment. One may indeed be seen as either wise or a fool as he reacts to these signs, but one who sees through them will not fear the verdict, knowing its origin and extent.

Case 1 —Zhaozhou's No(thing) —趙州狗子

Source: The Gateless Barrier Case 1.

The text of this case is more complete than the version found in the Book of Serenity, case 18, which appears similar but whose meaning differs from the present case. The version found in the Book of Serenity is the 42nd case of the present collection.

【中】

zhào zhōu hé shàng yīn sēng wèn gǒu zi hái yǒu fó xìng yě wú zhōu yún wú
趙州和尚因僧問：「狗子還有佛性也無。」州云：「無」。

【日】

こ じょうしゅうおしょう ちな そうと くし かえ ぶっしょうあ ま な しゅういわ む
擧す。趙州和尚、因みに僧問う、「狗子に還って佛性有りや也た無しや。」州云く、「無。」

【E】

A monk asked Zhaozhou: "Dogs also have a Buddha nature,[1] no?" Zhaozhou answered: "No!"[2]

[1] The question of the Buddha-nature of animals is discussed in various scriptures and was the subject of questions and often fruitless debates.

[2] "No": The Chinese original word (無 [wú]) can indicate both a negation and an absence. This case rests upon this dual meaning, where the answer points to no-thing-ness itself, as the absolute absence of things of the mind, with a mind that must be cleared of all worldly thoughts.

The world is built by the younger generations —those recently born from the womb onto the bare earth who have yet to see its nature. Enticed by the brilliant lights illuminating each one of its corners and the wide variety of strangely shaped objects found in it, they strive to ascend the heights of this world painstakingly built by the strength of man's arms, yearning to encompass its fullness with their curious, inquisitive gaze, their wide-open eyes turned to the distant and unreachable, their hearts always wanting more. The servant of the world is a slave to his unquenchable thirst for knowledge and power. He treads upon the earth with his feet. He climbs above the clouds and reaches for the deepest heavens. Even all of Life appears to submit to his absolute rule. His mind enfolds everything, every thing, and yet, it is as if he were blind to the foundation of all that *is*. Thus does the servant of the world seek wisdom from those acquainted with the way, the masters of the world, those who are free from the invisible and yet often overwhelming burden placed by the world upon the shoulders of its slaves.

The considerate master nonetheless does not rule over the diligent disciple. He is a master foremost because he knows where he stands and rules over himself, upon his *self*, rather than serving it. He knows all too well the heart of the inquirer, seeing in it a reflection of what his own once was. He thus benevolently offers an answer to the torrent of questions gushing out of the mouth of the impatient disciple, unable to control this raging flow, with a deafening roar: "No!" Presented with the petitions of a throng of weak and hungry men desperately seeking nourishment, the king, whose dominion lies beyond the frontier of the world, burns their requests with a lightning bolt, as swiftly as the blinking of an eye. He shuts their attentive ears with a thundering blast and binds their eyes with a blindfold made of the sturdiest cloth. They are surrounded by what they so desperately seek, drowning in what they so eagerly crave; yet they continue to beg the man of the way for this very thing, as if their senses were dulled. The key has always been in their hands, and yet, they still fail to perceive it. The gate has always been before their eyes, and still, they roam the world in search of it, distraught and lost. His heart

filled with boundless compassion, the master then swiftly cuts off the chain of their delusions. He breaks the spell subjugating his sons with a violent outburst, a roar that shakes the very foundation of their world. It is more than a mere word. It pierces through this world meticulously built with words to point out the naked earth and the clear sky beyond it, a pure tone resounding through the air, slithering into the ears of men, in the hope of showing them the truth of the way, the way toward the nature of all things, showing them the Way itself, his kingdom, the place where not a single thing can be found, but upon which the myriad of things forming the world endures. The vociferous outcry of the master jolts the clouds towering over the world and fractures the icy vaults of the heavens. It triggers a colossal deluge of snow that forms a canopy of white flakes, blurring the lines between all things, and leaving only a pristine blanket of light before the dwellers of the world. The myriad becomes one, and the one vanishes into nothingness, into no-thing-ness, a sublime display of the nature of being.

Case 2 —Vast and Empty, No Holiness — 廓然無聖

Source: The Blue Cliff Record Case 1.

This case is identical to the Book of Serenity, case 2.

【中】

jǔ liáng wǔ dì wèn dá mó dà shī rú hé shì shèng dì dì
舉。梁武帝 問 達磨 大師：「如何是聖諦[1] 第
yī yì mó yún kuò rán wú shèng dì yuē duì zhèn zhě
一義。」磨 云：「廓然無聖。」帝 曰：「對朕[2] 者
shéi mó yún bù shí dì bú qì dá mó suì dù jiāng
誰。」磨 云：「不識。」帝 不契[3]，達磨 遂渡江
zhì wèi dì hòu jǔ wèn zhì gōng zhì gōng yún bì xià huán shí cí rén
至魏。帝後舉問 志公，志公 云：「陛下還識此人
fǒu dì yún bù shí zhì gōng yún cǐ shì guān yīn dà shì
否。」帝 云：「不識。」志公 云：「此是觀音大士，
chuán fó xīn yìn dì huí suì qiǎn shī qù qǐng zhì gōng yún mò dào
傳佛心印。」帝悔，遂遣使去請。志公 云：「莫道
bì xià fā shī qù qǔ hé guó rén qù tā yì bù huí
陛下發使去取，闔[4] 國人去，他亦不回。」

[1] 【聖諦】S:【圣谛】[shèng dì]: “the holy truth” / “the noble truth” / “the fundamental teaching of Buddhism.” A word created to translate the Sanskrit concept of Āryasatya (आर्यसत्य). Related to: 四聖諦 [sì shèng dì] “the four noble truths [of Buddhism].”

[2] 【朕】 [zhèn]: First-person personal pronoun used by the emperor.

[3] 【契】 [qì]: “to match.”

[4] 【闔】 S:【阖】 [hé]: “the entirety [of the country].”

【日】

舉す。梁の武帝、達磨大師に問う、「如何なるか是れ聖諦第一義。」磨云く、「廓然無聖。」帝云く、「朕に對する者は誰ぞ。」磨云く、「識らず。帝契わず。」達磨遂に江を渡って魏に至る。帝、後に舉して志公に問う。志公云く、「陛下還た此の人を識る否。」帝云く、「識らず。」志公云く、「此れは是れ觀音大士、佛心印を傳う。帝悔いて遂に使いを遣わし去きて請ぜんとす。」志公云く、「陛下、使いを發し去きて取えしめんとするは莫道、闔國の人去くも、佗は亦た回らず。」

【E】

Emperor Wu of Liang asked Great Master Bodhidharma: “What is the highest meaning of the holy truth?” Bodhidharma replied: “Vast and empty, no holiness.” The emperor said, “Who is now standing in front of the emperor?” Bodhidharma said, “No idea.”[1] The emperor was not on the same level as he was. Bodhidharma then crossed the Yangtze River and went to the kingdom of Wei. Later, the emperor asked Zhigong about this. Zhigong said, “Does Your Majesty know who this man is?” The emperor said, “No idea.” Zhigong said, “He is the great Avalokitesvara, transmitting the seal of Buddha’s mind!” The emperor felt regret and was about to send an emissary to invite Bodhidharma to come back to him. Zhigong said, “Your Majesty, it would be of no use to send an emissary to bring him back. Even if all the people in the country were to go for this task, he would not return.”

[1] "No idea": Literally "I don't know," but here it also seems to express absolute ignorance, the casting away of all thoughts and knowledge, a meaning that can be better seen in the translation as "no idea."

The man exalted by the world as its supreme lord is instinctively tempted to see the power tied to his position as extending beyond the frontiers of this realm, a product of his hands and mind, as he considers that this world is a reflection of the truth of the earth and the sky. Having been called a son of heaven since infancy, he may consider himself holy, towering over a world populated by lowly plebeians, and only seek what is seen as the rarest, the most precious, what is sanctified in the eyes of this world. The cloudy heights are nonetheless one with the shadowy depths. The artificial hierarchies of the world are only the fruit of man's self-importance. When an emperor of the world meets a true king, whose kingdom is no-thing-ness itself, he cannot fathom the heart of the one standing in front of him, and he despises him because of his seemingly lowly condition, seeing him as ignorant. The greatest offense given to a son of heaven may be to show him that the heavens have given birth to all things, are sheltering all things, and that these things are the heavens themselves. Vast and devoid of any thing is the celestial vault. Filled with light, adorned with myriad radiant stars shining like rivers of diamonds throughout the velvety depths of space, and teeming with unceasing activity, it ultimately forms a whole that is only cut out into pieces by the sword of man's reason, giving birth to the illusions upon which he builds his world. It is easy to guess the price of a pearl or a gold coin, but only the wise may perceive the essence of all things, the value of no-thing-ness, a priceless kingdom extending to the farthest limits, an invaluable speck of dust lost in the abyss. Vast and empty is the expanse forming the heavens. Outside man's delusions, it is no-thing-ness itself, the place where there is neither holy nor profane, neither emperor nor slave, neither truth nor falsehood, but only absolute clarity, no longer besmirched by the stain of knowledge.

The man sheltering only no-thing-ness in his heart has let go of all knowledge. Without possessing any thing, and having peered beyond the walls of the world, he finds that the boundaries separating the self from the other have melted away. He no longer knows what fills up his eyes, what he touches or hears, for that which perceives is one with that which is perceived. Asked about who he is, he does not know, and naturally answers, without a trace of thought: "No idea."[5] Where there is no thing, neither can there be any idea. The one standing before his

[5]See: 久須本文雄. 《禅語入門》。東京：大法輪閣, 2000. Page 90 :「不識は識ー不識の分別意識を超越した高い次元の不識であります。」

eyes is himself, and the one seeing is the other, while all is as clear as the azure sky when the cold of the peak of winter has cleared away all the cottony clouds, and all that is left is a glaring, golden sun shining upon a carpet of white snow covering the entire land.

Like an empty shell, devoid of any pearl, the one who has only no-thing-ness in his heart is nonchalantly dismissed by the regent of the world, utterly ignorant of the truth of the heavens. The stranger, the man of the way facing the regent of the world, brought a scroll from his homeland to show the most invaluable thing found in his realm to this world: a blank scroll. Virgin of any sign, devoid of any fragment of meaning, this was the gift of the foreign visitor. Yet, it appeared exceedingly strange to the one who saw himself as a son of heaven, giving rise to anger and arrogance. The work of the skies nonetheless continuously shapes his heart, day after day. This work is the passing of time itself, with the celestial wheels unceasingly performing their revolutions, taking in their whirlwind the earth and the world built upon it. It leads men to realize their mistakes, to see their foolishness, if only they are ready to face the truth. Enlightened by the heavens, man is nevertheless condemned to accept the consequences of his past actions. Being is like a river perpetually flowing along the way of the sky, and no one can reverse its course. What is done cannot be changed, and there would be no point in doing so. The river inexorably flows forward, carrying all those caught in its raging current, taking them where they are meant to go, no matter whether they strive against or embrace it. Once no-thing-ness has penetrated deep into the heart of man, he feels in his bones that all that he seeks is within the reach of his hands, within sight. The man he hoped would return is himself, already right in front of him. The place he hoped to conquer is all around him, a desert where no-thing can be found, but where every thing truly *is*.

Case 3 —Entering the Fundamental Gate of the Not-Two —入不二法門

Source: The Blue Cliff Record Case 84.

This case is also found in the Book of Serenity, case 48, with only minor differences[6]

【中】

jǔ wéi mó jié wèn wén shū shī lì hé děng shì pú sà rù bú
舉。維摩詰 問 文殊 師利：「何等是菩薩入不

[6]See Book of Serenity, case 48: “舉。維摩詰問文殊師利。何等是菩薩入不二法門文殊師利曰如我意者於一切法無言無說無示無識離諸問答是為入不二法門於是文殊師利問維摩詰言。我等各自說已仁者當說。何等是菩薩入不二法門維摩默然。”

 èr fǎ mén wén shū yuē rú wǒ yì zhě yú yí qiè fǎ wú yán
二法門。」文殊曰：「如我意者，於一切法，無言
wú shuō wú shì wú shí lí zhū wèn dá shì wéi rù bú èr fǎ mén yú
無說，無示無識，離諸問答，是為入不二法門。」於
shì wén shū shī lì wèn wéi mó jié wǒ děng gè zì shuō yi rén zhě dāng
是文殊師利問維摩詰：「我等各自說已。仁者當
shuō hé děng shì pú sà rù bú èr fǎ mén xuě dòu yún wéi mó
說，何等是菩薩入不二法門。」雪竇云：「維摩
dào shén me fù yún kān pò liǎo yě
道什麼。」復云：「勘破了也。」

【日】

こ ゆい ま きつ もんじゅし り と いかなる こ
擧す。維摩詰、文殊師利に問う、「何等か是れ
ぼさつ ふに ほうもん はい もんじゅいわ わ
菩薩、不二の法門に入るとは。」文殊曰く、「我が
い ごと いっさい ほう おい むごん む せつ む し
意の如きは、一切の法に於て、無言無說、無示
む しき もろもろ もんどう はなれ これ ふに ほうもん はい
無識、諸の問答を離る。是を不二の法門に入ると
な これ おい もんじゅし り ゆい ま きつ と われら
爲す。」是に於て文殊師利、維摩詰に問う、「我等
おのおの と おわ なんじ まさ と いかなる こ
各自說き已る。仁者當に說くべし、何等か是れ
ぼさつ ふに ほうもん はい せっちょういわ ゆい
菩薩、不二の法門に入るとはと。」雪竇云く、「維
ま なん い ま いわ みぬき おお
摩は什麼と道いしぞ。」復た云く、「勘破了せり。」

【E】

Vimalakirti asked Manjushri: “What does it mean when one says: ‘Bodhisattvas enter the Fundamental Gate[1] of Not-Two’?” Manjushri said, “For me, it means that concerning all things, there are neither (suitable) words nor explanations, neither presentations nor knowledge, and they escape all questions and answers. This is how I understand ‘to enter the Fundamental Gate of Not-Two.’” Manjushri then asked Vimalakirti: “Each of us has given his own explanation. Now this gentleman should give us his explanation. What does it mean when one says: ‘the enlightened being enters the Fundamental Gate of Not-Two?’” (Xuedou said, “What did Vimalakirti say?” And again, he said, “Seen through!”)

[1] "Fundamental Gate" (法門 [fǎ mén]): Literally the "Dharma-Gate," but the word "Dharma" (धर्म) in Sanskrit means something that is firmly established, and by extension, a law. In a Buddhist context, it also represents "things" and the fundamental order of the universe. This is why it has here been translated as "fundamental gate," avoiding loanwords that only obscure the origin and essence of the term.

Woven of earth and air is our body, but our mind has also been fashioned by eons of experiences accumulated by life itself. Thus are we by our truest nature, our most deeply entrenched instincts, compelled to seek what we cannot reach, to see the invisible, to grasp the ethereal. When we are told: "this cannot be put into words," we double our efforts to bring this ineffable into our world, neatly cutting it into a "thing," brought within the reach of our incredibly arrogant but formidably human spirit. Still a prisoner of the lofty walls of things forming our world, one is tempted to ask: "What lies beyond them?" and the one who has thrown away his heart beyond these walls would then reply: "Nothing, no thing." Such an answer would nonetheless be lacking in benevolence. The one who is intimate with no-thing-ness commonly feels the duty to guide the slaves of the world into it. Thus does he paint a caricature of it, using the crude paintbrush of the world, coarse words flung into the air, caught by the ears of the blind. The doorway to the foundation of nature is the realization that this foundation is not to be found in the world of men, but neither is it something separated from it. If one dares to call the foundation of nature "the one," the only thing found when the mind refrains from slicing the oneness of nature into a multitude of pieces in order to grasp them, this is already a cutting out, as the existence of one thing implies a boundary, and therefore the presence of something lying beyond it, whereas no-thing-ness is boundless. It may be called the "not-two," as an attempt to refrain from defining what escapes definition. The mind may thus go on and on to find the impossible, as a confused mouse trapped in a maze, unable to see that it simply needs to jump out to experience freedom. To let himself be approached by it, man simply has to let go of words, let go of things, let go of the world into which he was thrown during his infancy. Neither "one" nor "not-two," what is to be discovered is what lies in the interstice between them.[7] Instead of always running to grasp things, the mind should continually run to avoid growing attached to things, embracing uncertainty, cherishing indeterminacy, and playing with the world while always remaining aware of the no-thing-ness that represents the foundation of all things, stretching his attention between these realms, incarnating their harmony with his very being.

[7] See: 神保如天. 《従容録通解》。東京：無我山房, 1915. Page 340 (Case 48): 「不二の法門とは不一不二の法門で一とも二とも定らぬ中道実相の法門を云ってゐるのである。」

The poor caricature, painted with crude words, is a mere invitation, a timid first step. True guidance comes in the form of a helping hand, doing more than simply showing something, but rather bringing the uninitiated to behold the truth without any mediation. Where there is not a single thing, there is no contrast between the self and the other. What one says is said to oneself, and what one says is a meaningless wave, an insignificant tremor echoing through the ether flowing through the sky. The distinction between words and mere sounds fades away. The difference between speech and silence vanishes, and all that is left is no-thing-ness, as an ecstatic experience, overwhelming the senses, far from an empty abyss that would be devoid of activity. Indeed, it bustles, like a titanic, immeasurable display, forming a whole, a single image depicting nature from the most remote past until the most distant future, without any distinction between them. Passing through the threshold of no-thing-ness, one finds oneself surrounded by the same environment. Nothing has changed, except for one thing: What is perceived is the whole rather than a gathering of parts, an unicity rather than a myriad of things, and even this unicity ultimately ceases to be grasped as a thing when the last thing is finally released and everything and no-thing appear clearly. When the newcomer has let go of everything, the words of guidance of the guide resonate through his mind like the song of the birds or the whisper of the wind sweeping the leafless branches of the winter forest, unhindered, as a gentle hand delicately caressing our hair. All questions have then lost their meaning, and no one expects an answer anymore. The guide tried to put the ineffable into words so that the novice could reach it through silence, and thus comes the time of silence.[8]

Case 4 —An Indian King Invites the Patriarch —東印請祖

Source: The Book of Serenity Case 3.

【中】

jǔ dōng yìn tǔ guó wáng qǐng èr shí qī zǔ bō rě duō luó qí wáng wèn
舉。東印土國王請二十七祖般若多羅齊王問
yuē hé bú kàn jīng zǔ yún pín dào rù xī bù jū yīn jiè chū
曰：「何不看經。」祖云：「貧道入息不居陰界，[1] 出
xī bú shè zhòng yuán chángzhuǎn rú shì jīng bǎi qiān wàn yì juàn
息不涉[2] 眾緣。[3] 常轉如是經，百千萬億卷。」

[1] 【陰界】 [yīn jiè]: “the concealed world.”

[8] See: 吳平。《新譯碧巖集》。台北：三民書局股份有限公司,2005 (Case 87): 「文殊有言道無言，維摩無言達無言。」.

[2] 【涉】 [shè]: This word literally means “to wade across a body of water,” but here, it means “to be involved” / “to be concerned with.”

[3] 【眾緣】 [zhòng yuán]: “the fate of all beings.”

【日】

こ　とういんど　こくおう　にじゅうななそ はんにゃたら　しょう
舉す。東印土の國王、二十七祖般若多羅を請し
さい　おうと　いわ　なん　かんきょう　そ
て齋す。王問うて曰く、「何ぞ看經せざる。」祖
いわ　ひんどうにゅうそくいんかい　きょ　しゅつそくしゅえん　わたる
云く、「貧道入息陰界に居せず、出息衆緣に涉ら
つね　にょぜきょう　てん　ひゃくまんおくかん
ず、常に如是經を轉ずること百十萬億卷。」

【E】

A king of Eastern India invited the twenty-seventh patriarch, Prajnatara, and the king asked him: “Why don’t you read the scriptures?” The patriarch said, “This humble man on the way does not stay in the concealed world while breathing in, and he does not concern himself with all the things caught in the wheel of destiny while breathing out. Constantly, he recites the book of ‘the things as they are,’ written in hundreds, thousands, millions, even billions of volumes!”

Some silences speak volumes, and there are massive books whose content loudly proclaims its own vacuity. The scriptures handed down by the ancients are the traces of the experiences of their lives. These traces may guide those who have lost the way, but one should be wary of them replacing the unmediated experience of what they depict with the words of the world. One may describe with countless pages the feeling of the icy touch of snowflakes delicately dropping upon our bare skin, as the sun’s rays promptly erode their intricate patterns, but this knowledge would be superseded in an instant by direct contact. What is true of the marvelous gift of the cold season is all the truer concerning the very foundation of nature itself. The scriptures are not to be burned, that is, returned to the sky, or buried, that is, offered back to the earth, but they are equally not to be held on to too tightly. The glare of the lighthouse should not be mistaken for the expanse of land concealed by the cloak of the night.

If one is exhorted to recite the sacred texts of his forefathers, he may reply with boldness: “The words of holiness are buried in the innermost parts of my flesh! The most sacred truth is what surrounds us now! Just look!” We indeed are the book of life, incarnate, the product of countless eons of meticulous refining. Each character forms an infinitely minute part of each living being occupying the thin layer of life between the firm face of the earth and the intangible immensity of the sky. No one needs to read this book for it to be part of the world. We are its pages, as well as the styluses wherewith history is written in it. Our hands can shape the earth around us according to our aspirations. They can transform the appearance of our surroundings, as we give birth to ideas and fabricate objects that become extensions of our limbs and minds. This power exerted by man nonetheless soon takes hold of him, leading him to lose sight of the unadulterated earth lying beneath the world built by his hands, to be blind to the heavens hidden by his accumulation of things. But thankfully, not all are caught in this redoubtable trap.

Asked to speak holy words, petitioned to expound the sacred works of language offered as an inheritance to the present generation, the humble man of the way offers in their stead something far more precious: himself, his own being, the perception of what it represents to live a life in harmony with the way, not simply blindly caught in its turbulent flow, but perceiving its raw nature and embracing it, knowing that he is the way himself. When a torrent of sensations is poured into his mind from the gates of his body, what he perceives is the entirety of the way, and when the cascade of his mind flows out of his body, through the movements of his limbs or those of his mouth, he is still a mere instrument of the way itself. Letting the ethereal fluid stored in the heavens run deep into his chest, he is offered a few more instants of life. Far from being oblivious to the incomparable preciousness of this immaterial gift, he does not lose himself in vain musings, in worldly musings. He rather takes advantage of this instant to fully appreciate the marvelous nature of being, the entirety of his senses interwoven with the innermost layers of his consciousness, letting the world of man disappear, forgotten, as if it never had been, feeling the serpentine characters of the book of life surreptitiously being erased, his body slowly dissolved, leaving only a sweet numbness, a faint trace with vague contours, a mélange of earth and world, self and other, subtle marriage of differences and identity. Then, letting the ethereal stream of life reverse its course, he expels the celestial gift from his bosom, filling the air with his breath. Doing so, he does not let himself be enticed by the charm of the world around him. He does not let himself be inebriated by the remarkable power offered to him by his flesh upon the earth and the sky. Impassibly, he experiences this moment when the misty torrent of life departs from him, as a prelude, a rehearsal of his ineluctable death, the instant of the last breath, left in the hands of fate. Being the way itself, he does not care about the

intricacies of its flow, sufficiently content with the mere perception of its mysterious nature.

Furthermore, the life of most dwellers of the land is paced by their breath, as they leave their mark upon the face of the earth and in the world of men. Each footprint, each mark of a tool left upon the ground, is a character in the story of life. The earth and the sky themselves are the book of the things *as they are*, a monumental volume, continuously being written. The discovery of the essence of being is easier when directly experienced rather than read about, through the accounts of the experiences of elders. To perceive things *as they are* is to experience them as not as mere things, but as instances of being itself, as reflections of ourselves, no different from us, and more importantly, not separate from us.

Case 5 —The Ordinary Mind Is the Way —平常是道

Source: The Gateless Barrier Case 19.

【中】

nán quán yīn zhào zhōu wèn rú hé shì dào quán yún píng cháng
南泉 因 趙州 問:「如何是道。」 泉 云:「平常
xīn shì dào zhōu yún huán kě qù xiàng fǒu quán yún nǐ
心是道。」 州 云:「還可趣向[1] 否。」 泉 云:「擬[2]
xiàng jí guāi zhōu yún bù nǐ zhēng zhī shì dào quán yún dào
向即乖[3] 。」 州 云:「不擬爭知是道。」 泉 云:「道
bù shǔ zhī bù shǔ bù zhī zhī shì wàng jué bù zhī shì wú jì ruò
不屬知，不屬不知；知是妄覺，不知是無記。[4] 若
zhēn dá bù nǐ zhī dào yóu rú tài xū kuò rán dòng huō qǐ kě qiáng shì fēi
真達不擬之道，猶如太虛廓然洞豁，豈可強是非
yě zhōu yú yán xià dùn wù
也。」 州 於言下頓悟。

[1] 【趣向】 [qù xiàng]: "to direct [oneself] toward a particular goal."

[2] 【擬】 S:【拟】 [nǐ]: "to assess." See case 25 (Book of Serenity, case 38) for a similar use.

[3] 【乖】 [guāi]: "to go against."

[4] 【無記】 [wú jì]: "what falls outside of [worldly] knowledge." This word is rich in meaning and thus tricky to translate without losing this richness. One dictionary defines it as being " neither good nor evil" (From: 渡邊敏郎。《新和英大辞典第5版》。東京：研究社, 2003.) The Koji'en dictionary, in addition to the aforementioned definition, indicates that it also means: "the fact that Shakyamuni Buddha refrained from replying to metaphysical questions regarding the eternal nature of the world" (「〔仏〕 釈尊が世界の永遠性などの形而上学的質問に対して答えなかったこと。無記答。 三性さんしょうの一つ。善でも悪でもないもの。」 From: 新村出. 《広辞苑第七版》。東京：岩波書店, 2018.)

【日】

舉す。南泉因みに趙州問う、「如何なるか是れ道。」泉云く、「平常心是れ道。」州云く、「還って趣向すべきや否や。」泉云く、「向わんと擬すれば即ち乖く。」州云わく、「擬せざれば爭でか是れ道なることを知らん。」泉云く、「道は知にも属せず、不知にも属せず、知は是れ妄覺、不知は是れ無記。若し眞に不疑の道に達せば、猶お太虛の廓然として洞豁なるが如し。豈に強いて是非すべけんや。」州、言下に頓悟す。

【E】

Zhaozhou asked Nanquan: “What is the way?” Nanquan said, “The ordinary mind is the way.” Zhaozhou asked: “Can you set your mind in its direction?” Nanquan said, “If you try to assess it, you will find yourself opposed to it.” Zhaozhou asked: “If I do not set my mind in its direction, how would I know it is the way?” Nanquan said, “The way is not found within worldly knowledge, and neither is it found outside of worldly knowledge. Worldly knowledge is a delusion arising from the senses, and what is outside of worldly knowledge is meaningless. If one really seeks to reach the way that cannot be willfully followed, one must be like the immense, empty expanse of the heavens. One should not be able to affirm that it is either right or wrong.” At these words, Zhaozhou experienced a deep enlightenment.

The most naïve questions are oftentimes the trickiest to answer, as when a child repeatedly seeks to know the reasons why the state of the world is as it is. What is the way of the sky, the path taken by the

whole of nature, the course of the heavens themselves, and all that they encompass—the essence of being itself? Whoever seeks to find it loses its trail, and in attempting to run toward it, it slips into darkness, like a skittish deer hiding behind the bare trees when the leafy garment of the forest has decayed and returned to the ground. Being the root of the whole of being, the way is the exact opposite of the extraordinary. It is the most pervasive, the most common, both what we are and what surrounds us at all times. Being so ordinary, the foolish dwellers of the earth think of it as a mirage, the fruit of the musings of those building the loftiest strata of the world, structures made of seldom-used words and obscure jargon, crafted by deluded people losing themselves each day in endless and fruitless thinking. It nonetheless can be found in any place, at any time. To perceive the most ordinary, one must first allow one's own ordinariness to take its place in one's own existence. Refraining from climbing the clouded summits of the world and abstaining from excavating the obscure abysses of the earth, the one letting himself be guided by his surroundings, forgetting himself and his self by impassibly heeding the songs of nature, will perceive the way by perceiving his own nature.

If one desires to turn toward the way, he is condemned to remain off the track. The way indeed knows no desire. It knows no self. Foremost, it does not know any thing, and neither does it ignore any thing. To seek something implies believing there is a rift between the seeker and that which is sought. To be attached to worldly knowledge implies that one severs himself from the rapids of sensations poured into the body by the earth and the skies, and to be a prisoner of mere earthly sensations means that one cannot discern anything, living like a beast, slave to its instincts. One cannot stray from the way, but one can be blind to it, thinking that it is out of reach. To reach it demands no effort whatsoever, not the slightest measure of wisdom. It only requires facing one's own mind, when it ceases from desiring more, from holding on to things, from possessing and appropriating. The man of the way has cast away the "yes" and discarded the "no." He leaves the "men of yes and no" to their futile battles for the conquest of the earth and the domination of the world. He lets these combatants inflate their own egos, building up barriers standing between themselves and the realization of the nature of the way of the sky, while he contemplates the heavenly vaults as a mirror and sees himself while beholding the surface of the ocean. The immense arms of the Milky Way are his limbs. The blazing sun and the pale moon are his eyes. The bulging seas are his tears, and the loftiest trees are the hair covering his skin. The night is the blinking of his eyes, and the winters are his time of rest. The twinkling stars are silvery freckles on his face, and the unfolding of the heavens is his own birth. Relinquishing his will, he gains all that he could ever have wished. Abandoning all things, he appropriates everything. Embracing ignorance, he perceives

the truth, finding the extraordinary in the most common, living the most fulfilling life by cherishing everydayness, letting the marvelousness of the typical shine at each moment of his existence, treasuring the familiar, exalting the simple, endowed with the gift of feeling the presence of the way that embraces the whole, as the innermost essence of all that *is*.

Case 6 —Yangshan's Mind and World —仰山心境

Source: The Book of Serenity Case 32.

【中】

jǔ yǎng shān wèn sēng shén chù rén sēng yún yōu zhōu rén
舉。仰山 問僧：「甚處人。」僧云：「幽州人。」
shān yún rū sī bǐ zhōng ma sēng yún cháng sī shān yún néng
山 云：「汝思彼中麼。」僧云：「常思。」山 云：「能
sī shì xīn suǒ sī shì jìng bǐ zhōng shān hé dà dì lóu tái diàn gé rén
思是心，所思是境。彼中山河大地，樓臺殿閣，人
chù děng wù fǎn sī sī dǐ xīn huán yǒu xǔ duō bān ma sēng yún mǒu
畜等物，反思思底心。還有許多般[1] 麼。」僧云：「某
jiǎ dào zhè lǐ zǒng bú jiàn yǒu shān yún xìn wèi jí shì rén wèi
甲[2] 到這裏總不見有。」山 云：「信位即是，人位
wèi shì sēng yún hé shàng mò bié yǒu zhī shì fǒu shān yún bié
未是。」僧云：「和尚莫別有指示否。」山 云：「別
yǒu bié wú jí bú zhòng jù rū jiàn chù zhǐ dé yì xuán dé zuò pī yī
有別無，即不中。據汝見處。只得一玄，得坐披衣，
xiàng hòu zì kàn
向後自看。」

[1] 【般】 [bān]: "[things] like this" / "this sort [of thing]."

[2] 【某甲】 [mǒu jiǎ]: "this one," used as an indirect pronoun.

【日】

こ きょうざん そう と いず ところ ひと そう
舉す。仰山、僧に問う、「甚れの處の人ぞ。」僧
いわ ゆうしゅうじん さんいわ なんじか うち おも そう
云く、「幽州人。」山云く、「汝彼の中を思うや。」僧
いわ つね おも さんいわ のうし これしん しょし
云く、「常に思う。」山云く、「能思は是心、所思は
これきょう かれ うち さんが だいち ろうたいでんかくじんちくとう もの
是境、彼の中には山河大地樓臺殿閣人畜等の物あ
し てい しん はんし かえ そこばくはん
り。思底の心を反思せよ、還って許多般ありや。」

僧云く、「某甲這裏に到って總に有る事を見ず。」山云く、「信位は即ち是、人位は未だ是ならず。」僧云く、「和尚別に指示あること莫しや否や。」山云く、「別に有り別に無しというは即ち中らず、汝が見處に據らば只一玄を得たり。得坐披衣向後自ら看よ。」

【E】

Yangshan asked a monk: “Where are you from?” The monk said, “From You Province.” Yangshan said, “Do you think of that place?” The monk said, “I do, constantly.” Yangshan said, “That which thinks is the mind, but that which is thought about is the world all around. In it, there are mountains, rivers, the great earth, towers and palaces, men, beasts, and all sorts of things. Reflect upon the mind that thinks. Are there many things there?” The monk said, “This monk[1] does not see anything here.” Yangshan said, “You believe that it is the case, with your mind, but you have yet to embody it.” The monk said, “Does this monk have any further instruction?” Yangshan said, “If you say that there is or that there is not, you miss the point. You have some insight, but have only gained one part of the mystery. Sitting down, putting on clothes, you will then see for yourself.”

[1] “This monk”: An indirect way to express oneself in the first person, and to distance oneself from one’s ego.

When we are asked where we come from, we are graciously offered an opportunity to examine what we are, our origin and our destination. We were born onto the earth, without remembering this incomparable experience, but what were we before this event? Life forms a continuous chain, going back to its emergence in the shallows of the sea, without a single instant of interruption. Do we think about this mysterious birthplace of life, the appearance of the first link of this incredibly long

and sturdy chain, and of what was there before that? Our horizon is nonetheless often limited to our immediate experience, and thus, endowed with a shallow mind, we simply state a worldly location as our answer to this most profound inquiry.

There are times for obscurity and times for clarity. The same hand that chastises should also offer a tender embrace, discerning when each is needed. If a man's horizon is restricted to what the world has given him to see, it is primarily because he remains oblivious to the nature of the very eyes with which he beholds it —a world into which he was unwittingly thrown at birth. Unceasingly flowing through his eyes and into his mind, the bustling stream of the senses is seamlessly transformed into the world occupying his thoughts. Mountains of things, neatly organized, chiseled into blocks with sharply defined contours, form this environment in which he spends his days. His birthplace bears a name, heard with the ears or seen with the eyes, and even he has been made into a thing, belonging to this gigantic mosaic, spread broadly through space and time. The guide then has one more question to offer to the fledgling: "Where are these things that form your world?"

Things are products of the world and, in turn, the world is a creation of the mind. What is experienced by the senses, the earth and all that is encompassed by the firmament, is a raw truth, but we do not experience it as a series of things. Only when the mind has performed its astonishingly complex yet hidden work does the unicity of nature appear as a multitude of things, forming our world, things that can be grasped by the mind as well as touched with one's fingertips. All things are thus mere illusions, creations of man's fertile mind, many of which were handed over to us as an inheritance by our parents and neighbors. World and sky are tightly interlaced, like the most magnificent, intricately woven brocade, mingling fine threads of light and gold, with both inextricably bound to each other, forming an indistinguishable whole, sharing the same essence.

When the things of our world begin to be seen as such, as fruits of the prolific imagination and the dexterity of man, then can the nature of both the things and what they represent shine in the eyes of the novice. Things sprout from what is not a thing, out of nothingness, out of no-thing-ness, and this is precisely the essence of nature, of the world created by man as well as the grandiose expanse enclosed by the skies. To see where we come from is to be intimate with no-thing-ness, not merely conceiving it with our consciousness, which turns it into just another worldly thing, but embodying it in the flesh as much as sustaining it with a clear mind, devoid of any attachment to the things belonging to this world. This impenetrable mystery can only be embraced by extensively decluttering the mind, by being mindful of the wondrous nature of the most fundamental acts keeping us part of life each day, realizing the preciousness of the miraculous gift that is to be present for one more day

above the earth. Sitting down, experiencing the weight of our own body, the ubiquitous downward pull of the earth upon our flesh, or putting on clothes, conscious of how they help us resist the relentless assaults of the frigid winds of the seasons when the sun retreats below the horizon for a large portion of the day, we may uncover the edge between world and earth, appropriating no-thing-ness without fleeing into an abyss, searching for an extinction of being. We then remain part of the world, and our environment is in every aspect similar to what it was before, but we are now endowed with a clearer mind, pervaded by no-thing-ness, as bright and crystalline as the azure sky itself, reflected in our dazzled eyes.

Case 7 —Dongshan's Place Without Grass —洞山無草

Source: The Book of Serenity Case 89.

【中】

jǔ dòng shān shì zhòng yún qiū chū xià mò xiōng dì huò dōng huò xī
舉。洞山示眾云：「秋初夏末兄弟，或東或西。
zhí xū xiàng wàn lǐ wú cùn cǎo chù qù yòu yún zhǐ rú wàn lǐ wú cùn cǎo
直須向萬里無寸草處去。」又云：「只如萬里無寸草
chù zuò me shēng qù shí shuāng yún chū mén biàn shì cǎo dà yáng
處。作麼生去。」石霜云：「出門便是草。」大陽
yún zhí dào bù chū mén yì shì cǎo màn màn dì
云：「直道。不出門亦是草漫漫地。」

【日】

こ とうざん しゅ しめ いわ しゅしょ げまつ ひんでい
舉す。洞山、衆に示して云く、「秋初夏末兄弟
あるい ひが あるい にし じか すべか ばんりむ すんそう ところ
或は東し或は西す、直に須らく萬里無寸草の處に
むか さ またいわ ただばんりむ すんそう ところ
向って去るべし。」又云く、「只萬里無寸草の處
さもさん さ せきそういわ もん いず すなわ
作麼生か去らん。」石霜云く、「門を出れば便ち
こ くさ たいようういわ じか い もん い
是れ草。」大陽云く、「直に道わん門を出でざるも
また こ くさまんまん ち
亦是れ草漫漫地。」

【E】

Dongshan instructed the assembly and said, "It is the beginning of autumn, the end of summer, and the brothers are about to scatter east or west. But they should all go straight to the place devoid of grass for ten thousand miles." And again, he said, "The place is devoid of grass for ten thousand miles, how are they going to get there?" Shishuang said, "Just out of the door, there is grass!" Dayang said, "I would even say: even before stepping through the door, grass is everywhere!"

How fortunate are those receiving the guidance of an elder, someone ready to hand over the fruits of his tiresome days spent upon the earth, as part of the living. The gigantic heavenly wheels continue their endless revolutions as the seasons seamlessly succeed one another, sweeping man along in their course. When the gathering of those who enjoyed the summer's clemency gives way to their scattering as the days darken, like minute grains of pollen being carried away from the flower by the wind so that they may become the source of a new growth, begins a solitary homecoming, propitious to introspection.

Before the departure and the entrance into the season of obscurity, however, comes the opportunity to contemplate what has been accomplished when brightness reigned over the world, and the luxuriant vegetation covered the dusty face of the earth. They are now surrounded by emerald trees and golden grasses. The elder presiding over the gathering, despite this fact, orders them not to return to the place whence they came, but rather to go back to their true home, the place from which all beings ultimately come from. This place offers a stark contrast with what surrounds them now. It is a wasteland, a desolate region, where not a single blade of grass can be seen for as far as the eye can see. This desert, this place where no thing can be found, may at first seem unwelcoming, but it is above all a place of clarity and freedom from the grasses of delusion and worldly desire.[9] Indeed, each blade of grass elegantly dancing with the breeze of our world is one more thing occupying the dismally cluttered mind of man, a thing of his world, obstructing the view of the crystalline, all-encompassing sky, carried on the way.

The eye of the diligent followers is yet now wide open, after a long sleep. These men finally see the profusion of things forming their world for what they are, as mere products of their minds revealing a facet of the earth and the sky but concealing their most fundamental essence, which

[9]See: 神保如天. 《従容録通解》。東京：無我山房, 1915. Page 551 (Case 89).

is no-thing-ness, pervading all. They distinctly see the place where they must return. If all things emerge as the result of the work of the mind, no-thing-ness can only therefore be reached within the mind itself, no matter what surrounds men or where they are standing on the earth. The eye shows them that there is no opposition, no inside or outside, no seer or seen. The grasses, older than the trees, sprout inside the heart as well as upon the earth if one fosters their growth, grasping them as individual things, not letting them go. But the young men are now aware of their nature: they are like thick lianas constraining their movements, which fall apart as soon as one ceases to resist. The men reach the desolate place, without grass, without moving an inch of their bodies, without taking one step toward another part of the earth. They simply realize that while grasses once grew on every inch of their untidy world, there is in truth not a single blade of grass upon the entire earth, and they feel finally liberated by the serene contemplation of the unfathomable immensity and absolute peacefulness of the desert around them.

Those who have seen and dwelt in the desolate land are for all that not meant to see their flesh waste away in it. The vision offered to them by their new eye should be shared with those who are still asleep. One is compelled to awaken others, and becomes a new link in the seemingly endless chain of transmission of this enlightenment, returning, treading upon the tall grasses, offering a helping hand, so that others may rise above these grasses and see the vast plains found beyond them.

Case 8 —The Staff Turns into a Dragon —挂杖化龍

Source: The Blue Cliff Record Case 60.

【中】

jǔ yún mén yī zhǔ zhòng shì zhòng yún zhǔ zhàng zi huà wéi lóng tūn
舉。雲門 以挂杖示眾云：「挂杖子化為龍，吞
què qián kūn liǎo yě shān hé dà dì shén chù dé lái
却乾坤[1] 了也。山河大地，甚處得來。」

[1] 【乾坤】 [qián kūn]: “the sky and the earth” / “the universe.” A term originating from the “Book of changes” (易經).

【日】

こ うんもん しゅじょう もっ しゅ しめ いわ しゅ
舉す。雲門、挂杖を以て衆に示して云く、「挂
じょうす か りゅう な けんこん のみこ おわ さんが
杖子化して龍と爲り、乾坤を呑却み了れり。山河

大地(だいち)、甚處(いずこ)よりか得來(えき)たる。」

【E】

Yunmen brandished his staff in front of the assembly and said, “This staff has turned into a dragon. It has swallowed up the heaven and the earth. Where do the mountains, the rivers, and the great earth come from?”

After life strenuously crawled onto the dry land from the shallows of the great ocean, conquering the entire earth, our distant ancestors then took refuge in the trees, attempting to escape the razor-sharp claws and fangs of other branches of the tree of life. Our thin, long arms and nimble, prehensile fingers are the legacy of this remote age when our distant forefathers became apes. Our hands are tailored to grasp the robust, wooden arms of the majestic kings of the forest, the branches feeding us with their succulent fruits. Boldly venturing out of the seclusion and safety of the forest, man made walking staffs out of these branches, to support his body while roaming the vast, grassy plains or climbing steep mountains. It represents the last thing that the man who has left everything behind holds onto, an artificial extension of his fleshy limbs, a seemingly worthless object that yet occupies a great place in his heart, perhaps a remnant of his lineage’s bond to the trees, unwittingly paying homage to the shape of his hands, the very source of mankind’s immense power over the earth.

The rise of man began with the abrupt emergence of things. The first one, the whole of being, appeared in his mind and then was cleaved into the heaven and earth, before the unicity of each one of these realms was itself shattered into innumerable pieces, the constellation of things that form the nature surrounding him. The lofty man, the dweller of the heights of the world of things, has still risen so high that he has lost touch with the ground, with the truth veiled by them. A new step in the evolution of his kind will thus involve a return to the source, a great collapse of things, like a reversal, a mending, following their uncontrollable shattering. The heart of man must experience the crumbling of the walls of things enclosing him, witnessing the objects touched by his hands turn back into the great body of the earth, reclaimed by it to form a whole. He must see each star merging with the sun and the moon, the clouds and the winds, turning into the all-encompassing sky. All the creatures roaming the seas, crawling upon the earth, or soaring through the air then naturally congregate, forming the

body of life itself, a single living thing. Once this crumbling of the borders delimiting things has been completed, the realms themselves collapse, one into the other. Life is dissolved into earth, leaving the latter alone with the sky, before the two great ones then become indistinguishable from one another, becoming a single thing. The last thing then remains in his hand, and he may do with it as he pleases. Shaped in his image, this final thing is revealed to be the self, the threshold of no-thing-ness, and the most difficult to let go. It has swallowed up the earth and the sky, like an insatiable dragon, yet now appears as an insignificant stick of wood. It can be discarded, and it instantly vanishes as soon as the man lets go of it, having seen its nature. He then experiences the crumbling of his mind and body, having left every thing, and being no-thing.[10]

Not letting himself be conquered by no-thing-ness, just as he refused to let himself be enslaved by the world of things, the man yet seizes again the last thing. He grasps the staff firmly with his hand, squeezing so energetically that this dragon then regurgitates all the things that it had swallowed, once again giving birth to the earth and the sky, life and the world. Equipped with this mighty staff, he is in control of the earth and the world, the sky and the living, inebriated by his newfound freedom, lord of no-thing-ness, king of the world, yet now chooses to serve the humblest, to value the worthless, to trample upon the precious.

Case 9 —The Place Without Cold or Heat —無寒暑處

Source: The Blue Cliff Record Case 43.

【中】

jǔ sēng wèn dòng shān hán shǔ dào lái rú hé huí bì shān
舉。僧問洞山：「寒暑到來，如何迴避。」山
yún hé bú xiàng wú hán shǔ chù qù sēng yún rú hé shì wú hán shǔ
云：「何不向無寒暑處去。」僧云：「如何是無寒暑
chù shān yún hán shí hán shā shé lí rè shí rè shā shé
處。」山云：「寒時寒殺[1]闍黎，[2]熱時熱殺闍
lí
黎。」

[1] 【殺】 [shā]: The word may be understood as meaning "to kill," literally, but as interpreted by Wu Ping, a Chinese translator of the Blue Cliff Record, the word could also have been used figuratively, as expressing the idea that "when it is cold, the monk is

[10] See: 吳平。《新譯碧巖集》。台北：三民書局股份有限公司, 2005: 「這則公案為雲門文偃拈拄杖，對僧眾開示自在的妙用。這種自在的妙用，意指山河大地與自身無差別，盡大地為沙門一隻眼，宇宙間的一切就是我。參禪者心中如有一物，則山河大地出現在眼前；參禪者心中如無一物，宇宙萬象纖毫不存。」

extremely cold" (See: 「那地方寒冷的時候會冷得你受不了，炎熱的時候會熱得你吃不消。」 From: 吳平。《新譯碧巖集》。台北：三民書局股份有限公司，2005. Page 480) This usage is well attested and is similar to the use of the word 死 [sǐ] "to die," in modern Chinese: 「冷死我」 "It is extremely cold." In the present case, this figurative use, all the same, does not imply that the monk would really "feel" the cold or the heat, but rather that he would become the cold and the heat themselves. In English, the literal sense is, despite this fact, clearer, and this is why this sentence has been translated here as "the cold kills this monk." This case also echoes the famous sentence of Zen master Linji: "If you see a Buddha, kill this Buddha" (「逢佛殺佛」 [féng fó shā fó]), From: 《臨濟錄》。 (CBETA).

[2] 【闍黎】 S:【阇黎】 [shé lí]: "a Buddhist teacher." The transliteration of the Sanskrit word आचार्य [ācārya]. It may also be written 闍梨 .

【日】

學す。僧、洞山に問う、「寒暑到來せば、如何か迴避せん。」山云く、「何ぞ寒暑無き處に去かざる。」僧云く、「如何なるか是れ寒暑無き處。」山云く、「寒き時は闍黎を寒殺し、熱き時は闍黎を熱殺す。」

【E】

A monk asked Dongshan: "When cold and heat come, how can one avoid them?" Dongshan said, "Why not go to a place where there is neither cold nor heat?" The monk said, "What is this place where there is neither cold nor heat?" Dongshan said, "When it is cold, the cold kills[1] this monk. When it is hot, the heat kills this monk."

[1] "Kills": See note 1 of the Chinese text.

Through the ages, our branch of the tree of life has learned to counteract the merciless assaults of the summer, with the fiery rays of our blazing star burning our skin, as well as the formidable onslaught of the winter, with frigid winds robbing us of our strength, threatening to bring to a halt the intricate piece of machinery formed by our body. We sweat when encountering sweltering heat, and shiver when facing bitter cold, but our innate defenses are often still too weak in front of the titanic forces of the sky. Where could one flee from the unstoppable

rage of the sky? Should one bury his flesh deep within the dark entrails of the earth? The realm towering over the earth provides the air keeping us above it, and we are meant to dwell on the surface separating the earth from the sky.

In close contact with nature, one may nonetheless realize that the earth and the sky are neither hot nor cold. There is no summer, no winter, no fire or ice. These are indeed only found within the limits of man's world, within his mind, as he stubbornly cleaves his surroundings into an endless series of opposite poles. The sole refuge from the heat and the cold assailing him is accessible only to one who is ready to let go of his world, to forget the very words: "heat" and "cold," casting them in absolute oblivion. Retreating beyond the boundaries of his world, he enters the great desert where not a single thing may be seen —where the ground is covered in immaculate snow, the sky is engulfed in thick mist, and no thing can be distinguished. There may relief be found from the dangers of nature. There may he liberate himself from the smothering worries of the world.

Yet escaping the world and its woes does not negate the real threat it poses to the living. Even while abiding in no-thing-ness, fully aware of its nature as the true home of life, the sun may still deplete the precious water oiling the machinery of his body. The icy winds may still strip him of his invaluable warmth, keeping the minuscule cogs animating his flesh in continuous motion. But this is where the strength of no-thing-ness gloriously shines, as its serene dweller has released all things, including any attachment to life and any fear of death, as the very boundary between these two states of earthly matter is itself a mere product of man's world and mind. In the place without cold or heat, one has already let death die.[11] When one confidently steps into it, he is no longer a living thing, and he loses his very name, his "I." In the eyes of the world, he is killed by the mighty hand of the heavens, and the worldly witness the decay of this man's putrid flesh, slowly consumed by other living things, eager to ensure their own survival, and slowly brought back into the depths of the earth. When extreme cold enfolds the earth, he becomes cold itself. When blazing heat fills the sky, he becomes heat itself. To the one who has courageously stripped himself of his identity and fearlessly thrown his being into no-thing-ness, there is no longer death or life. He has embraced death and transcended life, and he thus does not flee, as there is not a single thing to flee from.

Familiar with the place without cold or heat, and knowing it as his true birthplace, his original home, its dweller nonetheless does not necessarily stay in it forever. Letting himself be guided by the turbulent

[11] See: 吳平。《新譯碧巖集》。台北：三民書局股份有限公司, 2005. Page 478: 「【題解】這則公案是洞山良价借寒暑以示學人超脫生死之事。洞山良价以寒暑喻生死，謂寒時安住於寒處，熱時安住於熱處，沒有分別，始得自由；即提示在生死中得解脫的妙處。」

currents of the sea and carried by the tumultuous winds, he covers his back with clothing when he shivers, and immerses his chest in a river when he sweats. He does not despise the mortal flesh but does not exalt it either. He does not flee cowardly from death, but neither does he heartily pursue life. He simply walks the path with composure, living without striving to survive, existing while forgetting himself in the dazzling vastness of the world, keeping no-thing-ness, his genuine home and the source of all, always right before his eyes.

Case 10 —The Seamless Gravestone —無縫塔

Source: The Blue Cliff Record Case 18.

This case is identical to the Book of Serenity, case 85.

【中】

jǔ sù zōng huáng dì wèn zhōng guó shī bǎi nián hòu suǒ xū hé
舉。肅宗 皇帝問 忠 國師：「百年後，所須何
wù guó shī yún yǔ lǎo sēng zuò gè wú fèng tǎ dì yuē qǐng shī
物。」國師云：「與老僧作箇無縫塔。」帝曰：「請師
tǎ yàng guó shī liáng jiǔ yún huì ma dì yún bú huì guó
塔樣。」國師良久云：「會麼。」帝云：「不會。」國
shī yún wú yǒu fù fǎ dì zǐ dān yuán què ān cǐ shì qǐng zhào wèn
師云：「吾有付法弟子 耽源，却諳[1] 此事，請詔問
zhī guó shī qiān huà hòu dì zhào dān yuán wèn cǐ yì rú hé
之。」國師遷化[2] 後，帝詔 耽源 問：「此意如何。」
yuán yún xiāng zhī nán tán zhī běi xuě dòu zhuó yǔ yún dú
源 云：「湘之南，潭之北。」雪竇 著語云：「獨
zhǎng bù làng míng zhōng yǒu huáng jīn chōng yī guó xuě dòu zhuó yǔ
掌不浪[3] 鳴。」「中有黃金充一國。」雪竇 著語
yún shān xíng zhǔ zhàng zi wú yǐng shù xià hé tóng chuán xuě dòu zhuó
云：「山形拄杖子。」「無影樹下合同船，」雪竇 著
yǔ yún hǎi yàn hé qīng liú lí diàn shàng wú zhī shí xuě dòu
語[4] 云：「海晏河清。」「瑠璃殿上無知識。」雪竇
zhuó yǔ yún niān liǎo yě
著語云：「拈了也。」[5]

[1] 【諳】 [ān]: “to be familiar with [a subject]” / “to be well-versed [about a subject].”

[2] 【遷化】 [qiān huà]: “the death [of a monk].”

[3] 【浪】[làng]: “unwillingly” / “without the intention of doing so.”

[4] 【著語】[zhuó yǔ]: “a capping-phrase.” An interjection, meant to highlight a particular aspect of the case or to show one’s understanding of it to someone else, and also sometimes to sow the seed of doubt in the mind of the one hearing or reading it. A master may

demand such capping-phrases from his disciple, to see whether his point of view on this case is deep or shallow.

[5] 【拈了也】[niān liǎo yě]: This expression literally means "it has been picked up [with one's fingers]" but here, it is used idiomatically to show Xuedou's approval: "it has been grasped," and thus there is nothing more to say.

【日】

舉す。肅宗皇帝忠國師に問う、「百年の後、須むる所は何物ぞ。」國師云く、「老僧の與に箇の無縫塔を作れ。」帝曰く、「師の塔樣を請う。」國師良久して云く、「會すや。」帝云く、「會せず。」國師云く、「吾れに付法の弟子の耽源なるものあり、却って此の事を諳る。請う詔して之に問え。」國師遷化の後、帝、耽源に詔して、此意如何と問う。源云く、「湘の南、潭の北。」雪竇著語して云く、「獨掌浪りに鳴らず。中に黄金有って一國に充つ。」雪竇著語して云く、「山形の拄杖子。」「無影樹下の合同船。」雪竇著語して云く、「海は晏やか河は清む。瑠璃殿上に知識無し。」雪竇著語して云く、「拈じ了れり。」

【E】

Emperor Suzong asked Zhong, the national teacher: "After a hundred years, what should be done?" The National Teacher said, "Make a seamless gravestone for this old monk." The emperor said, "I would like to ask the master: what sort of gravestone would that be?" The National Teacher, after a long pause, then said, "Do you understand?" The emperor said, "I don't understand." The National Teacher said, "I have a Dharma successor, Danyuan, who is well-versed in this matter,

so he may be summoned and asked about this." After the National Teacher passed away, the emperor called Danyuan and asked him: "What is the meaning of this?" Danyuan replied: "The south of the river, north of the lake. (Xuedou commented: 'The one hand does not resound by mistake.') In between, there is gold, which fills the entire country. (Xuedou commented: 'A staff, hewn from a mountain forest.') Under the shadowless tree, all are in the same boat (Xuedou added: 'The sea is quiet; the river is clear.'). In the crystal palace, there is no one who knows." (Xuedou commented: "It has been grasped.").

A few dozen revolutions of our blue planet around the great luminary that offers us the day, a few dozen winters at most: such is the lifespan of a man. Men came before we were born, and others will follow after our death, until one day, the earth will ineluctably be engulfed in the flames of our dying star, unless we succeed in escaping this solid sphere that has given birth to life itself and has kept it close to its surface ever since, like an overly protective mother. What will remain of our presence, and what trace will there then be of man's existence? Once our world inevitably crumbles into oblivion, nothing will remain of it, as without the mind, there are no things, but rather only nothingness. When questioned about how he shall be honored once he returns into death, as no-thing-ness, one initiated to the way may simply ask for a seamless gravestone. The seamless is that which has no limits, no boundaries, and ultimately no form.[12] How would one create such a mysterious structure? To be puzzled by it means to be blind to the nature of what is found right in front of one's eyes. What is not bounded is nature itself, the all-encompassing sky, as what has no limits —what engulfs all that is. Thus there can only be one such thing, demanding that even the very notion of this "one" as a discrete thing be forgotten.

Embracing the permanent return into no-thing-ness, the initiated to the way already feels each speck of earth forming his body being snatched by the breeze and carried to the sooty clouds of the dark season, or carried by the glacial rains into the obscure heart of the ground. He is already ashes, scattered throughout the land. He is the snowy peaks of the loftiest mountains and the silt at the bottom of the ocean. He is blazing lava sprouting out of the fiery, bloody wounds of the earth, and the piercing eyes of a bird migrating to the great north. This is

[12]See: Villalba, Dokusho. *Hekiganroku. Crónicas del Acantilado Azul.* Miraguano Ediciones. 1994. Page 80: "Sin junturas quiere decir sin forma."

his grave, and he is already in it, or already is *it*. Do you understand? One should hope that you do not, for to understand is to grasp with the mind, to encircle with the tools of the world. Yet this is precisely the all-encompassing: that which cannot be contained by something else, but can only become familiar.

What is the seamless gravestone then? The south of the river, the north of the lake. Mindful of the nature of life-bearing liquid that forms most of our flesh, one should see how what is separated by the world forms a seamless whole when the boundaries erected by the mind of man have decayed. The crystalline, fresh river runs south, patiently descending toward the translucent, salty cloak of the planet, and once there, the insidious, continuous attacks of the luminous rays of the sun lift up some of its water into the air. It gathers in the heights to form monumental woolly masses guided by vigorous gusts. When the blazing forces of the heavens collide with the icy strength of the earth, this watery aether condenses into rain, hail, or snow, spraying upon the dry land, with life eagerly thirsting for it. It passes through the body of the living or is directly collected by the valleys, once again turning into rivers, completing the seemingly endless cycle, with the whole of the waters being continuously transformed, and yet always remaining the exact same element, part of a seamless whole, without the possibility of pinpointing the exact moment when these different steps occur.

Between the south of the river and the north of the lake, there is gold! This luminous treasure will only be discovered by one who is worthy, one who has been beyond north and south, who knows the place between nowhere and everywhere, familiar with the interstice between the water and vapor, rain and rivers. It fills the entire country, but cannot be seen with the eyes or grasped by the hands.

To envision the seamless gravestone is to see that the world itself is carried on an endless, turbulent stream, perfectly clear and pure, in a boat whose mast is the tree of life itself, casting no shadow upon mankind, as there is only brightness, a blinding light that chases away all distinctions, all contrast, leaving only perfect clarity. Where there is no distinction, there is no meaning. In a crystal palace, everything can be seen clearly, but nothing can be seen as a thing, different from what surrounds it. Knowledge therefore vanishes in such a crystalline abode; yet this ignorance can free those inside its seamless walls, revealing the very foundation, the ground, and the core of the experience of the nature of existence, with their own being seamlessly merged with the whole of being.

Case 11 —A Girl Leaves Her Meditation State —女子出定

Source: The Gateless Barrier Case 42.

【中】

shì zūn xī yīn wén shū zhì zhū fó jí chù zhí zhū fó gè huán
世尊 昔因 文殊[1] 至諸佛集處，值諸佛各還
běn chù wéi yǒu yì nǚ rén jìn bǐ fó zuò rù yú sān mèi wén shū nǎi
本處，惟有一女人，近彼佛坐入於三昧， 文殊 乃
bái fó yún hé nǚ rén dé jìn fó zuò ér wǒ bù dé fó
白佛[2] 云：「何女人得近佛坐，而我不得。」佛
gào wén shū rǔ dàn jué cī nǚ lìng cóng sān mèi qǐ rǔ zì wèn zhī
告 文殊：「汝但覺此女，令從三昧起，汝自問之。」
wén shū rào nǚ rén sān zā míng zhǐ yí xià nǎi tuō zhì fàn tiān
文殊 遶女人三匝，鳴指[3] 一下，乃托至梵天，[4]
jìn qí shén lì ér bù néng chū shì zūn yún jiǎ shǐ bǎi qiān wén shū
盡其神力而不能出， 世尊 云：「假使百千 文殊，
yì chū cī nǚ rén dìng bù dé xià fāng guò yī shí èr yì hé shā guó tǔ
亦出此女人定不得。下方過一十二億河沙國土，
yǒu wǎng míng pú sà néng chū cī nǚ rén dìng xū yú wǎng míng dà shì
有 罔明[5] 菩薩能出此女人定。」須臾 罔明 大士
cóng dì yǒng chū lǐ bài shì zūn shì zūn chì wǎng míng què zhì nǚ
從地湧出，禮拜 世尊， 世尊 勅[6] 罔明。却至女
rén qián míng zhǐ yí xià nǚ rén yú shì cóng dìng ér chū
人前。鳴指一下，女人於是從定而出。

[1] 【文殊】 [wén shū]: Manjushri (मञ्जुश्री [Mañjuśrī] in Sanskrit, meaning: “the beautiful one with glory”) is the Bodhisattva of keen awareness, the embodiment of Prajñā Wisdom. In the Chinese tradition, his “seat” (bodhimaṇḍa in Sanskrit, 道場 [dào cháng] in Chinese) is said to be Mount Wutai (五台山), in the province of Shanxi (山西).

[2] 【白佛】 [bái fó]: “to ask the Buddha.”

[3] 【鳴指】 S:【鳴指】 [míng zhǐ]: “to snap one’s finger [to make a noise].”

[4] 【梵天】 [fàn tiān]: In a Buddhist context it designates the heaven of the god Brahmā (a heaven of the form realm, still within saṃsāra and not nirvana), but the name originally is a translation of the Sanskrit word “Brahmā” (ब्रह्मा) designating the Hindu creator god.

[5] 【罔明】 [wǎng míng]: The bodhisattva Jālinīprabhaḥ (जालिनीप्रभ). In this case, he seems to be considered less experienced than other bodhisattvas, having yet to free himself completely from the yoke of the world.

[6] 【敕】 [chì]: “imperial orders.”

【日】

こ せそん むかし ちな もんじゅ しょぶつ あつま
擧す。世尊、昔、因みに文殊、諸佛の集る

處に至って、諸佛各本處に還るに値う。惟だ一りの女人有って、彼の佛坐に近づいて三昧に入る。文殊乃ち佛に白さく、「云何ぞ女人は佛坐に近づくを得て、我は得ざる。」佛、文殊に告ぐ、「汝但だ此の女を覺して三昧より起たしめて、汝自から之を問え。」文殊、女人を遶ること三匝、指を鳴らすこと一下して、乃ち托して梵天に至って、其の神力を盡すも出だすこと能わず。世尊云く、「假使い百千の文殊も亦た此の女人を定より出だすことを得ず。下方一十二億河沙の國土を過ぎて、罔明菩薩有り。能く此の女人を定より出ださん。」須臾に罔明大士、地より湧出して世尊を禮拜す。世尊、罔明に敕す。却って女人の前に至って指を鳴らすこと一下す。女人是に於て定より出ず。

【E】

In the time of the World-Honored One, Manjushri[1] went to the congregation of the Buddhas. When he arrived, the assembly was over, and each Buddha had returned to his original place. Only one girl remained, approaching the seat of enlightenment and entering Samadhi. Manjushri asked the Buddha, “How could this girl approach the seat of enlightenment, whereas I could not?” The Buddha said to Manjushri: “Cause her senses to awaken. Bring her out from samadhi and ask her yourself.” Manjushri walked in a circle around the girl three times, snapped his fingers, and even carried her to Brahma,[2] exhausting his miraculous strength,

but could not bring her out. The World-Honored One said, "Even a hundred thousand Manjushris could not bring her out of her state of deep meditation, but below this place, past twelve hundred million lands, there is Wangming,[3] who can bring her out of her meditation." As soon as the World-Honored One had spoken, Wangming sprang up from the earth and bowed to the World-Honored One. The World-Honored One instructed him, and he then went in front of the girl and snapped his fingers, and immediately, the girl came out from her state of deep meditation.

[1] "Manjushri": See note 1 of the Chinese text.

[2] "Brahma": See note 4 of the Chinese text.

[3] "Wangming": See note 5 of the Chinese text.

Men who have realized their familiarity with no-thing-ness are not severed from the world of those who have not realized it. They roam its crowded streets and talk to strangers. They strenuously till the fields and eat the nourishing fruits of the earth, like every other member of their species does. They enjoy playful interactions with their peers, as much as pointing out the way to those unacquainted with it. Even when they are separated by an ocean, on the earth, the men of the way can congregate, joining their existence, experiencing a communion of the mind, by sitting together in the place where nothing can be found. There, there is no before or after, no sleeping or awakening, delusion or enlightenment. To distinguish these things implies that one has already stepped back into the world of things, surrounded by the tangle of concepts created by the fertile minds of his fellows and the heaps of objects crafted by their dexterous hands.

The reward of experience may thus lead to a decrease in certain abilities, rather than to progress. The hermit isolating himself in the desert for a considerable length of time comes to forget about the world and its ways. Having stripped himself of his own self for too long, he then lacks the familiarity with the world needed to properly interact with those who, often unwittingly, remain its diligent servants. Such a man may thus be unable to guide the newcomer from this desert back to the world where they all come from. For such a task, one would need to find someone who has yet to lose himself, to lose his self, being completely engulfed in the vast emptiness of the desert, someone sufficiently familiar with this place of no-thing-ness, yet who still remembers the path back

to the great citadel of things.[13] Joined together, droplets of water are indistinguishable from one another. They form an indistinct mass to the observer, but if a block of ice comes into contact with this mass, part of the water swiftly turns into ice, leaving the liquid mass and becoming part of the frozen chunk. Likewise, the men still familiar with the world are those most capable of drawing out those who have lost themselves in the great desert, allowing them, in turn, to hear of the incomparable magnificence of their wasteland, of the grandiose nature of emptiness, before once again heading there, accompanied by a throng of newcomers who will discover this wondrous location, which, even if it were to be populated by all the living things found on the face of the earth, would still be preserved, as an infinite expanse where nothing can be found yet where everything shows its most fundamental truth.

Case 12 —Where Would One Seek the Mind —何處求心

Source: The Blue Cliff Record Case 37.

【中】

jǔ pán shān chuí yǔ yún sān jiè wú fǎ hé chù qiú xīn
舉。盤山 垂語云：「三界無法，何處求心。」

[1] 【三界】 [sān jiè]: "the three worlds." The world of desire (欲界), the sensory world (色界), and the extra-sensory world (無色界). It may also designate the past, the present, and the future.

【日】

こ ばんざん すいご いわ さんがい むほう いずこ
舉す。盤山垂語して云く、「三界無法、何處に
しん もと
か心を求めん。」

【E】

Panshan, as he was giving instruction, said, "In the three worlds,[1] there is not even one thing. Where should one seek the mind?"

[13]See: 山本玄峰. 《無門関提唱》。東京：大法輪閣, 1994.: 「もう今度は出るとか出んとか、そういう区別もなくなってしまってるので文殊の本当の世界である。だから出るとか出んとかはお互いの相対の世界で、仏になるとか、修行で迷ってるとかもお互いの相対の世界にあることである。…しかし罔明ははじめでありますから、差別の世界があるから、出すとか出さんとかいう事がありますが、文殊の方は悟るとか悟らんとかいう世界をすんでしまって、いわゆる法身の立場であります。」

[1] See note 1 of the Chinese text.

Abruptly thrown into a world bustling with light, sounds, and things at birth, we are nonetheless at first utterly helpless to make sense of our surroundings, this hapless accumulation of vague impressions. What first enthralls our naïve heart and seizes our curious mind is desire — the very foundation of the self. We cry with all our strength, without knowing what a cry is and what its purpose is, being solely guided by the instinct that is the most deeply engraved in our mind, as our enduring in this strange world demands that other living things provide us with nourishment, willingly or unwittingly, often through the sacrifice of their very flesh, their body being consumed to foster the growth of our own. Desire then grows into different branches, with one calling us to perpetuate our species, another to seek pleasure or power, or the inflation of the self, rarely satiated.

After desire, the young one discovers the realm of the senses, letting an unceasing flow penetrate his eyes, his ears, his nose, his tongue, and his skin, a flow that is then naturally turned into ten thousand things by his restless mind, without him having any awareness of this formidable work of classification and mental construction. The sounds and the light are replaced by words and characters, by objects and images, slowly leading him toward higher ground, farther away from his birthplace.

As winters succeed winters, the young one is then initiated into the arts of the world, the crafts of the human mind, and a new parcel of the world is unveiled before him. A new stream bursts out from the depths of his heart, one not taking its source in the realm of the senses but rather within the realm of thought itself. He discovers and appropriates the abstract, the conceptual, creating and manipulating what cannot be seen or touched.

The three facets of man's world reveal countless things to him, but they nonetheless also, by their light, eclipse the foundation of all things. The things of his world are mere representations —useful illusions that lead to a delusion: the mistaken feeling that he understands being itself because he fathoms the being of beings and the things of his world, unconscious of the underlying truth hidden by these sky-high walls of things. Before man built up his world, there was not a single thing encompassed by the skies. There was no earth, no stars, not even the celestial vault itself, and the products of his nimble hands or the fruits of his rich imagination did not fundamentally transform the essence of nature. Only in his mind do these exist as things, rather than as the whole of being.

Numerous upon the earth are the slaves of the world whose hearts know no peace, whose minds are relentlessly assailed by desire, worry, or fear, eating away their existence, shortening their days among the living. Some may even mutilate themselves, wounding their flesh, begging gods and men to offer them some desperately needed relief, to appease their troubled hearts. This is a direct product of the delusion induced by a mistaken view of the nature of the world. Seeking to heal their mind, they should realize that the mind itself is a creation of the mind, an illusion invented and exploited by life itself for its own perpetuation. Seeking to soothe their heart, they should become aware of the fact that there is no heart, nor pain, nor anger, nor despair outside of man's world. At all times, man can liberate himself from the unbearable yoke placed over his shoulders, finally coming to the realization that he is the one stubbornly keeping it on his back. Releasing his burden and letting go of his possessions, he may then wander at ease, light as a silk thread caught on a gentle breeze, mingling with snow dancing with the sun's rays across the bright, white expanse of the heavens, where there is no mind or heart, no anguish or desire.

Case 13 —Luzu Faces the Wall —魯祖面壁

Source: The Book of Serenity Case 23.

【中】

jǔ lǔ zǔ fán jiàn sēng lái biàn miàn bì nán quán wén yún wǒ
舉。魯祖凡見僧來便面壁。南泉聞云：「我
xún chángxiàng tā dào kōng jié yī qián chéng dāng fó wèi chū shì shí huì qǔ
尋常向他道，空劫以前承當[1]，佛未出世時會取，
shàng bù dé yí gè bàn gè tā rèn me lǜ nián qù
尚不得一箇半箇。他恁麼，驢年去。」

[1] 【承當】 S:【承当】 [chéng dāng]: "to take on."

【日】

こ ろ そ およ そう きた み すなわ めんぺき
舉す。魯祖凡そ僧の來るを見れば便ち面壁す。
なんせん き いわ わ よのつね た むか くうごう
南泉聞いて云く、「我れ尋常他に向って空劫
いぜん じょうとう ほとけいま しゅっせ とき ういしゅ
以前に承當せよ。佛未だ出世せざる時に會取せ
い な いっこはんこ え た いんも
よと道うすら。尚お一箇半箇を得ず。他恁麼なら
ろねん さ
ば驢年にし去らん。」

【E】

Whenever Luzu saw a monk coming, he immediately sat facing the wall. Nanquan heard about this and said, "I usually tell people to face what was before the eon of emptiness, [1] or to understand how it was before the Buddhas appeared in the world, and yet I have not found one successor, or half of one! Doing it in this manner, he will have to continue until the year of the donkey."[2]

[1] "The Eon of emptiness": One of the four eons (or kalpas) of Indian mythology: the kalpa of creation, the kalpa of existence, the kalpa of destruction, and the kalpa of emptiness.

[2] "The year of the donkey": There is no "year of the donkey" in the Chinese calendar. The expression here means "endlessly".

For the man who is fully awake, his eye wide open, and constantly one with the way of the sky, encounters with other men are like stumbling upon a ball of lush mistletoe in a snowy forest filled with leafless trees, or hearing the cries of a hatchling desperately striving for its life, breaking the quietude of the earth. The voice of the stranger is like the whisper of the wind caressing naked branches, and the sight of his complexion is like beholding the firmament at the heart of the night. Dwelling in the simplest abode, he has no-thing to offer to the visitor, and this is the invaluable present that he bountifully displays to all those approaching his threshold. He possesses nothing, lacking a single thing. What he has not, he gives to the guest. What the guest brings with him he smashes into the finest dust, before scattering it to the winds, leaving him naked, stripped of all his possessions. Most visitors therefore flee from this poor man, their hunger for knowledge and wisdom not being satiated, complaining that the old fellow not only offered them nothing but also attempted to rob them of their most prized possessions.

Meeting a stranger or a friend, the old man impassively faces a wall. When the sun shines like the most radiant diamond, or when the heavens strike down his home with thunderbolts, he imperturbably faces the wall. Few take heed of this wall. They do not look at what the host is pointing toward with his nose. The wall is nothing and everything. It is the end and the beginning, an impasse and a doorway, leading to the place where everything is without price, and where not a single thing can be seen or felt. The men of the world of things remain blind to the immeasurable value of what lies beyond the horizon of this world, the inconceivable, that which cannot be spoken of but only experienced. To show them the

way more often than not demands that one guide them using the tools of the world to clear the path, to pave the way, with words directly poured into their ears and characters flung into their eyes.

Silence is truer than the most eloquent words in depicting the essence; yet, so accustomed to the hustle and bustle of the world, its dwellers are deaf to its teaching. Some have caught a glimpse of what lies beyond the wall of things, have perceived that there is something and no-thing to be heard in silence, but they still need to hear about it with words. Finding another elder, the apprentice hears praises about the old man stubbornly facing the wall, telling how his practice is too deep to be fathomed by the world.[14] This one then benevolently shows him the way, with his tongue and his quill: "You should face what was before the beginning of time. You should see your own self before you were born. Then you will clearly see what is beyond the wall." Once again, even with such kind-hearted guidance, few will be those whose gaze succeeds in piercing the stone barrier before their eyes. For the guide, success or failure is still nonexistent. He inhabits the place where there is no beginning nor end, no winter or summer, no years or eons. He cannot even count the fingers on his hands, still less the companions sharing his humble abode. He is, despite this fact, content, having forgotten all worries and fled all torments, having lost himself in this wall, which itself has become invisible.

Case 14 —The Golden-Scaled Fish Passes Through the Net —透網金鱗

Source: The Blue Cliff Record Case 49.

This case is identical to the Book of Serenity, case 33.

【中】

jǔ sān shèng wèn xuě fēng tòu wǎng jīn lín wèi shěn yī hé wéi
舉。三聖 問雪峯：「透網金鱗，[1] 未審以何為
shí fēng yún dài rǔ chū wǎng lái xiàng rǔ dào shèng yún yì
食。」峯 云：「待汝出網來向汝道。」聖 云：「一
qiān wǔ bǎi rén shàn zhī shí huà tóu yě bù shí fēng yún lǎo sēng
千五百人善知識，話頭[2] 也不識。」峯 云：「老僧
zhù chí shì fán
住持事繁。」[3]

[1] 【鱗】 [lín]: "a scale" / "a scaled [animal]."

[14] See: 神保如天. 《從容録通解》。東京：無我山房, 1915. Page 182 (Case 23).

[2]【話頭】[huà tóu]: “the critical phrase [of a public case].” It literally means “the head of speech.” It designates a short phrase upon which the follower is invited by a master to meditate, a part of a public case, in particular. This use of such phrases became one of the characteristics of the Linji (臨濟) school of Zen, following the impulse of Dahui Zonggao (大慧宗杲, 1089–1163 A.D.). The Linji school was later associated with the practice of “inspecting the critical phrase” (看話) of public cases, causing it to be defined as the “Zen school of the inspection of the critical phrases” (看話禪), in contrast to the “Zen school of silent contemplation” (默照禪). The latter has greatly flourished in Japan as a result of the popularity of the teachings of Dogen (道元) in the 13th century.

[3]【事繁】[shì fán]: “to be busy with one’s duties” (事務繁忙).

【日】

舉す。三聖、雪峰に問う、「網を透る金鱗、未審、何を以てか食と爲す。」峰云く、「汝が網を出で來たるを待って道わん。」聖云く、「一千五百人の善知識なるに、話頭すら也識らず。」峰云く、「老僧は住持に事繁し。」

【E】

Sansheng asked Xuefeng: “A golden-scaled one has passed through the net. I do not know what it will eat from now on” Xuefeng said, “When you have passed through the net, then I will tell you.” Sansheng said, “A learned master with 1,500 disciples, and he doesn’t know how to argue.” Xuefeng said, “This old monk is busy being in charge of administering the temple.”

To have been blessed with the revelation of the absolute, to have been awakened by the deafening silence and blinded by the ultimate absence —this is a joy that can dull reason as surely as the most intoxicating drink. The desire to forgo all things may embolden the one still attached to his own self, puffing up his pride, leading him to stain the purity of his vision with the filth of the world. Endowed with the awareness of the vacuity of the man-made realm, the one returning to it may be tempted to feel above it, and above its dwellers who have yet to share his experience.

Meeting one acquainted with the absolute, the proud returnee may lay traps to prove his worth, the superiority of his newfound knowledge.

Haughtily declaring that he is now a golden being who has broken free from the seemingly impenetrable ramparts of the world, liberating himself from its unbearable yoke and now able to roam without hindrance in the great beyond, he impudently asks what is there for him to do now. With what should he now nourish this brilliant mind, this luminous body, having experienced the most fundamental essence? The golden-scaled fish has slipped through a net, but has unknowingly jumped straight into another, whose grip is even tighter.

The one hearing these asinine questions, seeing these ludicrous baits for what they are, has better things to do than to indulge in such infantile banter. Seeing the fish with its mouth wide open, shamelessly pouring out nonsense, he throws his bait into the gaping orifice, feeding him something that appears sweet to his palate, but will sooner or later reveal itself to sting his entrails. In front of the boastful, the wise humiliates himself. In front of the weak, he shows himself strong.[15] When he humbly asks, he shall receive clear guidance. When he sees himself, he will see how much he has erred.

On the day when the drifting learner will truly embody the way of the sky, and not simply catch a furtive glimpse of it, he will laugh at the memory of his own foolish words. Having immersed his whole self in the waters, he will see that there is neither fish nor net, neither inside nor outside. There is no food, and no one to be fed. Then will he understand the wisdom of the humble servant, who agrees to wade through the mud to bring others back to the clear waters, bathed in the incomparable brilliance of the sun, where there is only light and translucence. There, numbers are meaningless, and the worries of the world are nowhere to be seen. There is only the vastness of the limpid ocean, the peace of being carried by the tumultuous currents, one with them, ungraspable and unseen.

Case 15 —Not Abiding in Clarity —不在明白里

Source: The Blue Cliff Record Case 2.

【中】

jǔ zhào zhōu shì zhòng yún zhì dào wú nán wéi xián jiǎn zé

舉。趙州示眾云：「『至道無難，唯嫌揀擇。』

[15] See Wansong's preface on this case: "Weak when meeting the strong. Hard when encountering what is soft. When two hard things collide, one into the other, there's got to be a wound. Then, tell me, how does one encounter the other?" Chinese original: 「逢強即弱。遇柔即剛。兩硬相擊。必有一傷。且道。如何迴互去。」, From: 《萬松老人評唱天童覺和尚頌古從容庵錄》。 CBETA (Case 33).

cái yǒu yǔ yán shì jiǎn zé shì míng bái lǎo sēng bú zài míng bái lǐ
[1] 纔有語言，是揀擇，是明白。老僧不在明白裏。
shì rǔ huán hù xī yě wú shí yǒu sēng wèn jì bú zài míng bái lǐ hù
是汝還護惜也無。」時有僧問：「既不在明白裏，護
xī gè shén me zhōu yún wǒ yì bù zhī sēng yún hé shàng jì
惜箇什麼。」州云：「我亦不知。」僧云：「和尚既
bù zhī wèi shén me què dào bú zài míng bái lǐ zhōu yún wèn shì jí
不知，為什麼却道不在明白裏。」州云：「問事即
dé lǐ bài liǎo tuì
得。禮拜了退。」

[1]【至道無難，唯嫌揀擇】[zhì dào wú nán, wéi xián jiǎn zé]: “the supreme Way is not difficult; it simply dislikes picking and choosing.” The opening verse of the poem “Faith in Mind,” 信心銘 [xìn xīn míng], attributed to the third patriarch of Zen, Sengcan (鑑智僧璨 [Jiànzhì Sēngcàn]). The poem continues as follows: 「至道無難，唯嫌揀擇。但莫憎愛，洞然明白。毫釐有差，天地懸隔。」 “The supreme Way is not difficult; it simply dislikes picking and choosing. Neither love nor hate, and you will clearly understand. Be off by a hair, and there is a gap as wide as the one separating heaven from earth.”

【日】

こ じょうしゅう しゅ しめ いわ し どうかた
舉す。趙州、衆に示して云く、「至道難きこ
な た けんじゃく きら わずか ご げん あ
と無し、唯だ揀擇を嫌う、と。纔かに語言有れ
こ けんじゃく こ めいはく ろうそう めいはく うち あ
ば、是れ揀擇、是れ明白。老僧は明白の裏に在ら
こ なんじ は ごしゃく や とき そう あ
ず。是れ汝還た護惜する也無。」時に僧有り、
と すで めいはく うち あ こ なに
問う、「既に明白の裏に在らずんば、箇の什麼を
ごしゃく しゅういわ わ また し そう
か護惜せん。」州云く、「我れも亦知らず。」僧
いわ おしょうすで し なにゆえ かえ
云く、「和尚既に知らずんば、爲什麼にか却って
めいはく うち あ いう しゅういわ じ と
明白の裏に在らずと道う。」州云く、「事を問うは
すなわ よ らいはい おわ しりぞ
即ち得し、禮拜し了らば退け。」

【E】

Zhaozhou, instructing the assembly, said, “‘The supreme way is not difficult, it simply dislikes picking and choosing.’[1] But as soon as there is language, there is picking and choosing; there is ‘understanding’ and clarity. This old monk does not abide in clarity. Do you cherish and hold on to this ‘clarity’ or

not?" At that time, a monk asked: "You say you do not abide in clarity, so what would you cherish and hold on to, then?" Zhaozhou said, "I don't know, either." The monk said, "If that monk does not know, then why do you say that you do not abide in clarity?" Zhaozhou said, "One asked for something and got something.[2] Now bow and withdraw."

[1] "The supreme way is not difficult, it simply dislikes picking and choosing": A quote. See note 1 of the Chinese text.

[2] "One has asked for something and has gotten something": The original phrasing (問事即得) leaves ample space for interpretation. It can mean that he has gotten an answer, but the Chinese word 得 may also mean that he has succeeded in something. Here, it may perhaps mean succeeded in making the master fall into his trap.

The way that can be talked about is not the eternal way.[16] Where the will of man is manifested, the way cannot be perceived. The way of the sky embraces all that is, but man feels compelled to build towering walls of things around himself, concealing the magnificence of the heavens, for unlike the celestial things, those forming his world can be seized and played with. They can be controlled and understood, scrupulously examined from all angles, thrown into a bright light, revealing each one of their most minute details as clearly as the day. These things veil the truth of the sky, but without them, he is utterly blind, experiencing a meaningless truth, thrown into a dark, bottomless pit. This may be the essence of being, but he feels compelled to flee, to take refuge in the luminous illusions of the world, where falsehood and caricatures abound, but where the comfort of apparent meaningfulness can bring him durable contentment.

The deceitful clarity or the meaningless truth —this is the puzzling choice presented to those who aspire to let themselves be shaped by the way of the sky. The wise knows that there is no point in choosing either. One should remain on the sharp edge separating hard truth from sweet delusion, language from silence, world from sky. To abide solely in one of them is an easy task, but to take it upon oneself to brazenly go back and forth, to boldly step into the perilous mire for the benefit of others, this shows a mastery of the self, and its abandonment, a prerequisite to embracing the way. Explaining the ineffable, shedding light upon the abyss, what a ridiculous endeavor it is! And yet, a light-bearer of the

[16] Cf. The opening sentence of Laozi's Dao De Jing: "The way that can be spoken of is not the eternal, unchanging way. The name that can be named, is not the eternal, unchanging name." Translated by the author. Original Chinese: 「道可道，非常道。名可名，非常名。」 From: Original Chinese text From: 阿部吉雄。《新釈漢文大系〈7〉老子荘子上巻》。東京：明治書院, 1966. Page 11 (Chapter 1).

way will accept to ridicule himself if it can save others. Encountering a bright student, overwhelmed by his newfound vision of his world but having yet to release the grip he exerts on his own self, he may even be humiliated by the one he intends to guide, but unbeknownst to the foolish and arrogant pupil, one who has humbly abandoned his own self cannot be humiliated, as there is nothing left to humiliate anymore.

When one dares to shed light upon the darkness, to bring words breaking silence to pieces, contradiction is then easy to notice. As soon as one opens his mouth, inanity ineluctably echoes in the air, falling into the ears of the men of the world, but to the creatures of the wild it is only a rumbling of the earth, a melody of life. Roaming the dusty, cluttered streets built by the hands of their fathers, two light-bearers, men of the way, may be seen running after shadows, like vivacious cats chasing their own tails. They are laughing loudly, knowing perfectly what they are doing, even if the onlookers consider them mad, as their voices rise to the loftiest heavens, resonating loudly across the earth. The likelihood of such a pleasant encounter between two men of the way is like the one of two stars colliding, and one should express gratitude to the heavens for being witness to such a rare event, a precious occasion to learn what one is destined to become. The wrinkled hand has pulled up the silky-smooth one of the novice, and they now stand upon the same ground. Both have gotten something, and both have lost every-thing. Something has been learned, and every-thing has been forgotten. A deep bow would be in order to conclude this frivolous play, as is the custom, but all the actors have vanished, and the stage has been cleared completely. After the long night, the dark season, nonetheless comes the grand rebirth of clarity, the triumphant return of the bright, and the unfolding of the play then continues, without any interlude.

Case 16 —Baizhang's Ducks —百丈野鴨

Source: The Blue Cliff Record Case 53.

【中】

jǔ mǎ dà shī yǔ bǎi zhàng xíng cì jiàn yě yā zi fēi guò dà
舉。馬大師與百丈行次，見野鴨子飛過。大
shī yún shì shén me zhàng yún yě yā zi dà shī yún shén
師云：「是什麼。」丈云：「野鴨子。」大師云：「什
me chù qù yě zhàng yún fēi guò qù yě dà shī suì niǔ bǎi zhàng
麼處去也。」丈云：「飛過去也。」大師遂扭百丈
bí tóu zhàng zuò rěn tòng shēng dà shī yún hé céng fēi qù
鼻頭，丈作忍痛聲，大師云：「何曾飛去。」

【日】

舉す。馬大師、百丈と行きし次、野鴨子の飛び過ぐるを見る。大師云く、「是れ什麼ぞ。」丈云く、「野鴨子。」大師云く、「什麼處に去くや。」丈云く、「飛び過ぎ去れり。」大師、遂に百丈の鼻頭を扭る。丈、忍痛の聲を作す。大師云く、「何ぞ曾て飛び去らん。」

【E】

As Great Master Ma was taking a walk with Baizhang, they saw a skein of wild ducks flying by. The Great Master said, “What is that?” Baizhang said, “A skein of wild ducks.” The Great Master said, “Where did it go?”[1] Baizhang said, “It flew away.” The Great Master then twisted the tip of Baizhang’s nose, and Baizhang cried out in pain. The Great Master said, “Did it ever fly away?”

[1] “Where did it go?”: The word “skein” has been added in the translation, so as to avoid being forced to use a plural pronoun, absent in the original Chinese, to designate what went away, preserving the ambiguity between the birds and the whole of nature, seemingly at the center of this case.

Arduous is the task of a guide to the way. The guide cannot simply take the hand of his protege and lead him there. The one guided must discover the path by himself, being only told how he is straying. The benevolent scout on the way will also place stumbling blocks on his course, testing his reactions and progress so that the novice will avoid more dangerous pitfalls. Seeing that one has yet to contemplate the purity of the empty sky, remaining a blind servant of the constellations of things, he must first lead him to realize his own predicament, his servitude to the world of men.

Strolling along a calm river whose shores are coated with fresh snow while woolly clouds silently pass over the land, undisturbed by the affairs of the living, the pathfinder and his protege are beholding the

magnificence of nature. A skein of ducks, frightened by the intrusion of these curious creatures into their territory, then suddenly takes flight, soaring above the trees, soon concealed by the long, leafless branches, like so many arms imploring the sky for the coming of spring and the renewal of life. Then comes the bait; then is the trap laid by the guide, in the form of the simplest possible question, the earthliest use of the tools of the world: "What is it?"

Either truly blind or simply playing the game of the master, the protege jumps headlong into the trap: "a skein of ducks." An all too natural answer, and yet one that betrays his condition as a slave of things. The product of eons of careful selection, his mind instinctively notices the animals moving around him, detaching them from their background, his eyes focused on them, transforming each one of them into a thing of the world, bearing a name and being associated with countless characteristics. Each duck may be seen as an assemblage of succulent pieces of meat or as a potential pet. It is recognized by its quack, and the skein is separated between drakes and hens. Even each feather, and each strand of hair of each feather, may become a thing itself, according to an endless decomposition, a progressive shattering and dissection of the whole of nature by the mind into countless things. It seems almost certain that the ducks, by their flight, merely obey an instinct that drives them to flee the cold, to escape the fangs and the claws of the beasts roaming the land or the arrows and bullets of our brethren. What drives this flight? Fear of death, a yearning for food, or mere lust of the flesh, the same instincts indelibly carved in the innermost parts of ourselves. To see these animals as food or danger is a fundamental ground of our own being, and yet the reaching of our very essence demands that one see beyond the vision offered to us by our instinct, that we courageously conquer our own nature, so that we would be able to behold the magnificent truth of nature, veiled by these things.

Still caught in the trap, the novice is invited to go even deeper inside it by the guide: "Where did it go?" to which, once again, an obvious answer is given: "It flew away." The guide then takes the matter into his own hands, twisting the nose of the man who jumped into his snare as the protégé cries in pain. This pain brings him back to the earth, pointing out the fact that he is not a disembodied mind, but also flesh and bone, with this dolorous experience awakening his most profound instinct, as he uncontrollably lets a strident sound rush out of his mouth. The ducks have bitten his nose, and the one who was bitten is now flying away, away from the delusions of the world, as things become clearer, until all things themselves vanish.

Each duck is part of the whole of life. Life itself is a part of the earth, encompassed by the sky, but when these are seen in their truth,

there is only one thing that encompasses all that is, and this is the way of the sky. This realization is the last step before the last thing itself fades away, together with the last remnants of the world, leaving no-thing. The landscape does not change at all. It now only shines in its truth, outside of the boundaries set out by men, not existing as mere things, but rather felt as a whole, before being experienced as no-thing-ness. Then, the fluttering of the wings is seamlessly woven together with the cry of pain and the voice of the master. The beak of the duck is felt on one's nose at all times, and the wintry scene unfolding before their eyes cannot be distinguished from the lush beauty of springtime. Boundaries have fallen, and even without having taken one more step, the protégé has reached his destination, having transcended his care for his own life and his fear of death, the frontier between the two having worn away, enduringly freeing him from his deepest instincts, his oldest chains, showing him the ineffable truth of all things.

Case 17 —Fayan's Hairbreadth —法眼毫釐

Source: The Book of Serenity Case 17.

【中】

jǔ fǎ yǎn wèn xiū shān zhǔ háo lí yǒu chā tiān dì xuán
舉。法眼 問 脩山主：「『毫[1] 厘有差，天地懸
gé rǔ zuò me shēng huì xiū yún háo lí yǒu chā tiān
隔[2] 』[3] ，汝作麼生會。」脩 云：「毫厘有差，天
dì xuán gé yǎn yún rèn me yòu zhēng dé xiū yún mǒu jiǎ
地懸隔。」眼 云：「恁麼又爭得。」脩 云：「某甲
zhǐ rú cǐ hé shàng yòu rú hé yǎn yún háo lí yǒu chā tiān dì
只如此，和尚又如何。」眼 云：「毫厘有差，天地
xuán gé xiū biàn lǐ bài
懸隔。」脩 便禮拜。

[1] 【毫】 [háo]: "a hair" / "a very small [quantity]."

[2] 【懸隔】 S:【悬隔】 [xuán gé]: "a great gap."

[3] A quote from the poem: "Faith in Mind" (信心銘 [xìn xīn míng]), attributed to the third patriarch of Zen, Sengcan (鑑智僧璨 [Jiànzhì Sēngcàn]). The context of this verse is as follows: 「至道無難，唯嫌揀擇。但莫憎愛，洞然明白。毫釐有差，天地懸隔。」 "The supreme Way is not difficult; it simply dislikes picking and choosing. Neither love nor hate, and you will clearly understand. Be off by a hair, and there is a gap as wide as the one separating heaven from earth."

【日】

こ ほうげん しゅざんしゅ と ごうり さ
擧す。法眼、脩山主に問う、「毫釐も差あれば

天地懸かに隔たる、汝作麼生か會す。」脩云く、「毫釐も差あれば天地懸かに隔たる。」眼云く、「恁麼ならば又爭でか得ん。」脩云く、「某甲只此くの如し、和尚又如何ん。」眼云く、「毫釐も差あれば天地懸かに隔たる。」脩、便ち禮拜す。

【E】

Fayan asked Xiushanzhu: "'If there only is a hairsbreadth of difference, it is the distance between heaven and earth.'[1] How do you understand it?" Xiushanzhu said, "If there is only a hairsbreadth of difference, it is the distance between heaven and earth." Fayan said, "If this is it, how would one get it?" Xiushanzhu said, "For this humble monk, this is it. How is it for the master?" Fayan said, "If there only is a hairsbreadth of difference, it is the distance between heaven and earth." Xiushanzhu then made a deep bow.

[1] A quote, see note 3 of the Chinese text.

The great desert, the seemingly infinite expanse where uniformity reigns supreme and nothing can be distinguished, is the place where man loses all notions of distance, dimension, or substance. This inscrutable location may appear to the onlooker as having the breadth of a snowflake, or that of an entire galaxy. It may seem to be covered with the darkest soot, or resplendent like the most intense blaze. There, to perceive the smallest interstice separating things is to lift up the veil covering the constellations of things forming the world, to chase away silence with noise, to eliminate plainness by introducing distinctions and contrasts. Having ceased to be a man of yes and no, of large and small, the widest chasm inspires no fear in his heart, being considered in the same way as the most insignificant fissure. The silvery moon indeed touches the tip of our noses, and our fingertips are licked by the flames of the sun. One step, and we cross rivers and oceans. One bite, and we swallow the entirety of life. Drinking a lake, we have not wet our lips, and the blinking of our eyes is enough for glorious civilizations to rise and fall.

Where there are no things, there is neither gap nor absence. Oneness reigns, without distinction between ruler and ruled, between the lord and his dominion.[17]

The lover of the desert nonetheless rarely spends all his days enjoying its serene quietude. Having experienced no-thing-ness indeed renders him more able to navigate the complexities of the citadel of things sheltering most of his kind. Seeing the nature of his brethren and piercing through their hearts with his gaze, he playfully interacts with them. Seeing himself in the eyes of one of them, he may decide to explore this strange mind in front of him, to attempt to draw out something from what appears to be an inexhaustible well of things. He then dares to ask if this man sees the difference between the breadth of a hair and the distance between heaven and earth. To acknowledge such a difference would be to stain the pristine blanket of snow offered by the heavens, to break an infinitely large panel of glass, first cleaved in two, but soon shattered into innumerable shards, which, in turn, then cut everything that crosses their paths. The ears and the tongue of the one to whom this is asked play with the world and with words, but his mind is still occupied by his true home, the place where no-thing is found, and where everything simply *is*. His reply is therefore that of a mirror: he reflects the image offered to him, refusing to be played, rather returning the present of the stranger to the one who gave it, simply repeating the question. Why such rudeness? To the one whose home is no-thing-ness, a thing offered is a burden placed upon his shoulder, an alienation from his beloved dwelling, a temptation to once again jump into the trap and find himself enslaved by the cluttered world of things. Refusing to interpret, to engage in argumentation, the question is heard as a mere sound rather than an assembly of words to be deciphered. It is heard as a piece of the earth and the sky rather than a thing of the world of man. He himself boldly stands like a granite wall towering over the land, and this noise of the world simply reverberates upon its surface, falling back into the ears of the one who emitted it.

The dweller of the desert shares with this empty expanse its most fundamental nature. He is a mirror and a piece of glass, both letting light pass through it and reflecting an image. Facing a neighbor, another one of its inhabitants, he not only sees himself but also hears the echo of each sound he produces, bouncing again and again. The one attempting to explore the other then becomes the one who is investigated, but as they recognize what they are facing, all distinctions soon fade away. Having met this other self, the distinction between them vanishes, as the gap between them is now less than a hairbreadth, and they are now in perfect communion. The countrymen return to their common homeland, hand in hand, mind in mind, having nothing left to prove and nothing

[17]See: 神保如天. 《従容録通解》。東京：無我山房, 1915. Page 139 (Case 17).

left to offer.

Case 18 —Dizang's Most Intimate —地藏親切

Source: The Book of Serenity Case 20.

【中】

jǔ dì zàng wèn fǎ yǎn shàng zuò hé wǎng yǎn yún yī
舉。地藏 問 法眼：「上座何往。」眼 云：「迤
lǐ xíng jiǎo zàng yún xíng jiǎo shì zuò me shēng yǎn yún bù
邐[1] 行脚。」藏 云：「行脚事作麼生。」眼 云：「不
zhī zàng yún bù zhī zuì qīn qiè yǎn huò rán dà wù
知。」藏 云：「不知最親切。」[2] 眼 豁然大悟。

[1] 【迤邐】 S:【迤逦】 [yǐ lǐ]: "meandering" / "winding."

[2] 【親切】 S:【亲切】 [qīn qiè]: "close and dear" / "familiar."

【日】

こ ちぞう ほうげん と じょうざいづ ゆ
舉す。地藏、法眼に問う、「上座何くにか往く。」
げんいわ い り あんぎゃ ぞういわ あんぎゃ
眼云く、「迤邐として行脚す。」藏云く、「行脚の
じ さもさん げんいわ ふち ぞういわ ふち もっと
事作麼生。」眼云く、「不知。」藏云く、「不知最も
しんせつ げん かつねん たいご
親切。」眼、瞎然として大悟す。

【E】

Dizang asked Fayan: "Where are you going, senior monk?" Fayan said, "I am on pilgrimage, wandering, guided by the winds." Dizang said, "Why are you undertaking this pilgrimage?" Fayan said, "I don't know." Dizang said, "Non-knowing is most intimate." Fayan suddenly attained great enlightenment.

Life is driven by an instinct for exploration, of wandering. This is what led it out of the womb of the sea, as it crawled onto the dry

land, before covering the entirety of the earth and occupying the thin coat of air elegantly clothing our planet. Some creatures continue to search for greener pastures to satiate the hunger of their bodies, while others set themselves on a spiritual quest, seeking wise men and exotic rituals, ascetics and new visions of their world. The destination of such a journey is, even so, often a homecoming, a return to their roots, showing that what they sought always was within the reach of their trembling hands, within the scope of their inquisitive gaze. Stumbling upon a man of undeniable experience, the pilgrim will sooner or later have to be confronted with this question: "Where are you going?" Where are we all going, as a whole? This is the question that should be pondered. Together, carried by the tender embrace of the arms of our pearly galaxy, we are all gently carried upon the way of the sky. The clear-minded wanderer now sees this, as he spends nights enthralled by the glorious sight of these extended arms, painted with care in the celestial vault, with myriads of luminous dots illuminating the obsidian dome like rivers of diamonds, each representing a world of its own. He is now a pilgrim dragged along the way, following the winds, having forgotten his own will on the road and given up his self to be swallowed by the creatures roaming the mountains. The names of the provinces he passed through have left his mind, and he has no notion of the duration of his wandering. Intrigued by this perplexing answer, this demonstration of his mastery of the pitfalls of the world, the man of experience utters words that are right on the edge between earth and world. Neither attempting to grasp a preconceived reality nor retreating into silence, he decides to dig a little deeper into the heart of the surprising traveler, and suddenly throws another question at him: "Why are you undertaking this pilgrimage?"

The words of the fool often resonate with those of the wise. The former is often difficult to distinguish from the latter, and just like when the destination is found to be the starting point, the first words are often identical to the last, those uttered with great care after a lifetime of reflection and practice: "I do not know!" "No idea!" What changes is the mind at their source, and thus the same sentence may represent the pinnacle of the discovery of nature, or a crude display of one's crass inanity. Hearing such an answer, one is for all that forced to face a more terrible danger than any of those encountered in the wilderness by the pilgrim. Presented with such ambiguity, one would be tempted to try to discern the wise from the fool, the one who knows from the ignorant, the proficient master from the novice. This would, however, be to stray and to fall into the pit, to cloak clarity with obscurity. When one ceases to shatter the whole of nature into pieces, the sage can no longer be discerned from the simpleton. The home then becomes the most exotic location, and the remote and strange lands are seen as familiar.

The end of the path of learning is the forgetfulness of what has been

learned, completing the circle of existence. Thus is the pilgrim graciously offered a final remark: “Non-knowing is the most intimate.” When there is no longer an opposition between wise and fool, a contrast between staying and journeying, the home and the foreign, then can one finally realize that the home is where the heart takes its source, the place where knowledge has vanished, where only the whole is felt, before this whole, in turn, itself disappears, leaving only no-thing-ness in its stead. True intimacy is then discovered, as distances no longer have meaning, and we are not only close to the whole of nature, but are the whole of nature, with each thread of our being seamlessly woven with all that *is*.

Case 19 —Jiashan Brandishes the Sword —夾山揮劍

Source: The Book of Serenity Case 68.

【中】

jǔ sēng wèn jiā shān bō chén jiàn fó shí rú hé shān yún zhí
舉。僧問夾山：「撥塵見佛時如何。」山云：「直
xū huī jiàn ruò bù huī jiàn yú fù qī cháo sēng jǔ wèn shí shuāng bō
須揮劍，若不揮劍漁父棲[1]巢。」僧舉問石霜：「撥
chén jiàn fó shí rú hé shuāng yún qú wú guó tǔ hé chù féng
塵見佛時如何。」霜云：「渠[2]無國土，何處逢
qú sēng huí jǔ sì jiā shān shān shàng táng yún mén tíng shī shè
渠。」僧迴舉似夾山。山上堂云：「門庭施設[3]
bù rú lǎo sēng rù lǐ shēn tán yóu jiào shí shuāng bǎi bù
不如老僧。入理[4]深談猶較石霜百步。」

[1] 【棲】 S:【栖】 [qī]: “to perch” / “to stay.”

[2] 【渠】 [qú]: The third-person pronoun: “he.”

[3] 【門庭施設】 [mén tíng shī shè]: Literally “the facilities of the front garden.” Here, it seems to mean “teaching methods.” The “front garden” indeed often designates a place where Zen is practiced, and the “facilities” are the skillful means used to teach disciples. (See: 「門庭施設，指師家接化學人所使用之方便機法。禪林中常說之第二義門即係權假施設，相對者，第一義門即入理深談。又「門庭之說」即指方便說。」 From: 慈怡. 《佛光大辭典》。北京图书馆出版社，2004. Page 3606)

[4] 【入理】[rù lǐ]: “to enter the matter of the inner essence.” The word 理 [lǐ] can designate different things. In addition to the “inner essence,” it commonly designates “logic” or the works of the mind, such as the sciences, and also the idea of establishing things according to a particular form of order.

【日】

こ そう かっさん と ちり ばら ほとけ み
舉す。僧、夾山に問う、「塵を撥って佛を見る

時如何。」山云く、「直に須らく劍を揮うべし。若し劍を揮わずんば漁父巣に棲まん。」僧、擧して石霜に問う、「塵を撥って佛を見る時如何。」霜云く、「渠に國土無し、何れの處にか渠に逢わん。」僧、廻って夾山に擧似す。山、上堂して云く、「門庭の施設は老僧に如かず、入理の深談は猶お石霜の百歩に較れり。」

【E】

A monk asked Jiashan: "What if one sweeps away the dust[1] and sees the Buddha?" Jiashan said, "One must brandish the sword.[2] If one does not brandish the sword, the fisherman remains in a nest [of reeds].[3] " The monk asked Shishuang about this: "What if one sweeps away the dust and sees the Buddha?" Shishuang said, "He has no country, so where would one stumble upon him?" The monk told this to Jiashan. Jiashan ascended the rostrum and said, "Concerning the facilities of the front garden,[4] this old monk is ahead of Shishuang, but to enter the matter of the inner essence[5] and to engage in deep dialogues, Shishuang is one hundred steps ahead."

[1] "The dust": It often designates the things of the world, and its delusions.

[2] "The sword": It is linked to man's capacity to discern things, his mind acting like a sword that separates what is fundamentally one.

[3] "The facilities of the front garden": See note 3 of the Chinese text.

[4] "The inner essence": See note 4 of the Chinese text.

The delusions and worries occupying our mind, and even the very things forming our world, may appear to be specks of dust on the spotless mirror displaying the truth of being.[18] Once one has begun to see this

[18]See the story of Huineng's verse about the mirror and the dust in the first chapter of the "Platform Sutra of the Sixth Patriarch" (六祖壇經).

enthralling image, he feels compelled to diligently scrub away this dust, in the hope of being able to contemplate it in all its purity. Doing so, one nonetheless remains caught in the weeds of the world, like vines tightly entangled all around his body, leaving him unable to move or see. He then suddenly realizes that he is covered in dust up to his neck, and the more he attempts to sweep it away, the deeper he is buried in it. He ceases striking vainly at the dust with the sword of his reason, his discerning mind that cuts all things into neat pieces, as the more he cuts, the more numerous are the things entrapping him, increasingly finer grains that invade the smallest interstice. The path toward freedom begins when he realizes that he is battling against windmills, against the winds and the seas, a futile enterprise. His sword must be brandished far above his head, pointing at the clear azure sky, once all the clouds have scattered,[19] as an acknowledgment that reason is powerless against the all-encompassing realm. Offered to the heavens and cast into the air, the sword must be abandoned before the dust can be carried away by the vigorous gusts occupying the lower heavens. Only then do the reeds trapping the fisherman begin to wither away, leaving the waters as clear as the celestial dome. His field of view finally unobstructed, he still finds himself lost, as what he beholds is not what he sought. The face of a god, the hand of a guide transcending man's nature, a holy one dwelling in a sanctified land, this is what he expected, what his soul longed for, but he now only sees nothing.

A celestial being is someone who abides in the heavens, in the essence of being, this glorious space that heartily welcomes the being of all beings in its arms. To live in the heavens is to live in no-thing-ness, the foundation of the sky and all that it encompasses. This is the place where there is not a single thing, and thus there is no land where anyone may stumble upon the celestial being, nor any object that could offer us a faithful image of him to behold. Abiding in no-thing-ness, he is nowhere to be found. He cannot be found, simply because he has never been out of sight. When one sweeps away the dust, he is the dust. When one polishes the mirror, he is the mirror, but man needs to open his eyes to what he is.

[19]See the following story: "On the eve of his last battle at Minatogawa, Kusunoki Masashige asked the eminent Yuan dynasty Zen Master Mingji Chuzhun (Minki Soshun: 1264-1338), who had come to Japan and lived in both Kenchō-ji and Kennin-ji Temples: 'when thoughts of life and death occur one after another, what is one to do?' 'Cut off both heads and let your one sword rest icy against the sky,' he replied. With this, Masashige overcame life and death to become a man of the Great Death (daishi teinin)." From: Kusumoto Bun'yū; Ruymar, Michael D. (Tr). *Zengo Nyūmon —An Introduction to Zen Words and Phrases.* [unpublished manuscript]; Original Japanese: 「楠正成が湊川において戦死する前日に、わが国に来朝して、建長・建仁両寺に住した中国元の高僧明極楚俊禅師 (一二六四—一三三八) に対して、生死の念がこもごも起こる時、どうすればよいですか。と尋ねましたところ、両頭を截断すれば、一剣天に倚って寒し。と答えています。これによって、正成は生死を超克して大死底の人となったのです。」From: 久須本文雄。《禅語入門》。東京：大法輪閣, 1982. Page 27.

The truth of being is embraced when the sweeper realizes that there is no dust to be swept away, and that there is no mirror to clean. There is no one sweeping things, and nowhere where dust could accumulate. Then is no-thing-ness completely unveiled, with the vanishing of all things, even the very idea of no-thing-ness itself. Then, no encounter is needed, as there is no one to face, and yet, all has been fulfilled.

Part II

The Spring of the Self

When the first buds timidly pierce through the melting snow, as the first rays of dawn illuminate the countryside and the birds gently sing their songs of seduction and mirth, the eyes of man rejoice in this fascinating sight, as he feels the relief coming from the heavens after a long period of supplication. A faint smile then appears on his face while he passes the threshold of his abode, admiring the glorious rise of life out of the earth, the triumphant return of the spring.

The snowy garment enshrouding the earth has now been burnt by the fiery rays of the sun. Vast arrays of blades of grass inconspicuously emerge from the depths, and legions of rodents venture out of their lairs, while the trees are slowly painted with green dots, increasingly covering their nakedness. The man who has passed through the winter of emptiness now sees the spectacle unfolding before his eyes under a distinctive light, as things emerging out of no-thing-ness, as the spring born out of the winter. He forgot himself in the darkness of the frigid months, but now, as he sees the buds, the birds, the wild flowers, and his brethren leisurely strolling on the country paths, the uniformity of the place where there is no-thing gives way to a splendid variety of things and beings, revealed through the brilliance of the day. Through encounters with others, it is also his own self that emerges from the barren landscape of winter. He is a shoot sprouting out of a branch that appeared dead but now reveals itself to be full of life. He is a person whose mind now cuts the oneness of nature into a collection of objects and beings, and who shapes no-thing-ness itself into things, who causes the desert to flourish into a lush meadow.

As the trees are now wrapped in a mantle of bright leaves, veiling their bark, their substance, their essence, man is now likewise putting on a mask concealing his true nature, one that allows him to become a full-fledged member of the world of men, to penetrate the great citadel built by his branch of life, where he will find understanding, recognition, and meaning, at the price of forgetfulness of his own true face. Exalted among men, rejoicing in the brotherly interactions, the dances, the conversations, eagerly playing his part in the great play of life, he celebrates the clemency of the heavens, the generosity of his world, without care or worry, forgetting the revelation offered to him when he was dispossessed of every single thing.

The citadel is nonetheless more than a refuge of the deluded, a place of forgetfulness and ignorance. Those who have kept the treasure of winter in their hearts, not letting the alluring forgetfulness sown in man by the springtime grow within themselves, indeed continually roam its paved streets, looking through the latticed windows, seeing the no-thing-ness underlying all things, ready to offer a sobering potion to those intoxicated by the illusions of the bright, and to cause them to once again contemplate their true face. Some of them crack the heavy mask covering

their faces with a deafening shout, letting them once again see that there is something behind it and that the mask is not who they are. Others will convince them to take this mask off themselves, by ridiculing this instrument crafted by the hands of man, so poorly reflecting his glorious nature. Some will even let themselves be brought out of their citadel, into the great lake formed by the melting of the winter snow, seeing its wobbly surface offering them a vision of themselves, pointing out the falsehood of the mask and revealing the truth beyond it —a face of light, like the face of the stars. It shows them what they truly are as the distinction between their face and the stars slowly fades away. And yet they still stand there upon the face of the earth below, protruding out of it, just like the minute shiny dots illuminating the celestial dome stand out from the darkness encompassing all that *is*.

Case 20 —No Good and Evil —不思善惡

Source: The Gateless Barrier Case 23.

【中】

liù zǔ yīn míng shàng zuò chèn zhì dà yǔ lǐng zǔ jiàn míng zhì jí
六祖因明 上座趁至大庾嶺，祖見明 至，即
zhì yī bō yú shí shàng yún cǐ yī biǎo xìn kě lì zhēng yē rèn jūn
擲[1] 衣鉢於石上云：「此衣表信，可力爭耶。任君
jiāng qù míng suì jǔ zhī rú shān bú dòng chí chú sōng lì
將去。」明 遂舉之，如山不動。踟躕[2] 悚慄。[3]
míng yuē wǒ lái qiú fǎ fēi wèi yī yě yuàn xíng zhě kāi shì zǔ
明 曰：「我來求法，非為衣也，願行者開示。」祖
yún bù sī shàn bù sī è zhèng yǔ me shí nà gè shì míng shàng
云：「不思善，不思惡，正與麼[4] 時，那箇是明 上
zuò běn lái miàn mù míng dāng xià dà wù biàn tī hàn liú qì lèi zuò
座本來面目。」明 當下大悟，遍體汗流，泣淚作
lǐ wèn yuē shàng lái mì yǔ mì yì wài huán gèng yǒu yì zhǐ fǒu zǔ
禮，問曰：「上來密語密意外，還更有意旨否。」祖
yuē wǒ jīn wèi rǔ shuō zhě jí fēi mì yě rǔ ruò fǎn zhào zì jǐ
曰：「我今為汝說者，[5] 即非密也。汝若返照自己
miàn mù mì què zài rǔ biàn míng yún mǒu jiǎ suī zài huáng méi suí
面目，密却在汝邊。」明 云：「某甲雖在黃梅 隨
zhòng shí wèi xíng zì jí miàn mù jīn méng zhǐ shòu rù chù rú rén yǐn shuǐ
眾，實未省自己面目，今蒙[6] 指授入處，如人飲水，
lěng nuǎn zì zhī jīn xíng zhě jí shì mǒu jiǎ shī yě zǔ yún rǔ ruò
冷暖自知，今行者即是某甲師也。」祖 云：「汝若
rú shì zé wú yǔ rǔ tóng shī huáng méi shàn zì hù chí
如是，則吾與汝同師黃梅。善自護持。」

[1] 【擲】 [zhì]: “to put” / “to place” / “to throw.”

[2] 【踟躕】 [chí chú]: “to waver” / “to hesitate”

[3] 【悚慄】 S:【悚栗】 [sǒng lì]: “to shake in fear.”

[4] 【與麼】 S:【与么】 [yǔ mǒ]: “[something] is like this” (modern Chinese: 猶這麼，如此).

[5] 【者】 [zhě]: This word is not here used in its literal sense, meaning “person.” Associated with the particle “也” at the end of the sentence, the word 者 [zhě] is used as a conjunction linking the two parts of the sentence and expressing the fact that a judgment is stated. Here, this judgment concerns the fact that the head-monk Ming is mistaken concerning his belief that the patriarch’s teaching represents a secret. The following quote represents another example of such structure: 「今所谓慧空禅院者，褒之庐冢也。」 (From: 宋・王安石《游褒禅山记》)

[6] 【蒙】 [méng]: “to receive [a favor].”

【日】

こ　ろく そ　ちな　みょうじょうざ お　だい ゆ れい
舉す。六祖、因みに明上座趁うて大庾嶺に
いた　そ　みょう　いた　み　すなわ　えはつ　せきじょう
至る。祖、明の至るを見て、即ち衣鉢を石上に
なげう　いわ　こ　え　しん　あら　ちから
擲って云く、「此の衣は信を表わす、力をもて
あらそ　きみ　も　さ　まか　みょう　つい
爭うべけんや、君が將ち去るに任す。」明、遂に
これ　あ　やま　ごと　どう　ちちゅうりょうりつ
之を舉ぐるに、山の如くに動ぜず。踟躕悚慄す。
みょういわ　われ　きた　ほう　もと　え　た
明曰く、「我は來って法を求む、衣の爲めにするに
あ　ねが　あんじゃ かいじ　そ いわ　ふ
非らず。願わくは行者開示したまえ。」祖云く、「不
し ぜん　ふ し あく　しょうよ も　とき　なこ　こ　みょうじょうざ
思善、不思惡、正與麼の時、那箇か是れ明上座が
ほん らい　めんもく　みょう　とう げ　たいご　へん たい あせ ながし
本來の面目。」明、當下に大悟し、遍体汗流る。
きゅうるい さ らい　と　いわ　じょうらい　みつ ご みつ い
泣涙作禮し、問うて曰く、「上來の密語密意の
ほか　かえ　さら　い し あ　いな　そ いわ　われ
外、還って更に意旨有りや否や。」祖曰く、「我、
いまなんじ　た　と　もの　すなわ　みつ　あら　なんじも
今汝が爲めに說く者は、即ち密に非ず。汝若し
じこ　めんもく　へんしょう　みつ　かえ　なんじ　へん
自己の面目を返照すれば、密は却って汝が邊に
あ　みょういわ　それがし　おうばい　あ　しゅ したが
在らん。」明云く、「某甲、黃梅に在って衆に隨う
いえど　じつ　ま　じこ　めんもく　せい　いまにっしょ
と雖も、實に未だ自己の面目を省せず。今入處を
し じゅ　こうむ　ひと　みず　の　れいだんじ
指授することを蒙って、人の水を飲んで冷暖自

知するが如し。今行者は即ち是れ某甲の師なり。」祖云く、「汝若し是の如くんば、則ち吾、汝と同じく黄梅を師とせん、善く自から護持せよ。」

【E】

As the sixth patriarch was pursued by the head-monk Ming in the Dayu mountain range, he placed the bowl and robe[1] on a stone in the road and said, “This garment is just a symbol of faith. It is not something that can be fought over. Go ahead and take it.” When Ming tried to pick it up, it would not move and was as heavy as a mountain. Ashamed, trembling, he then said, “I came to ask for the Dharma, not for the robe! May the one walking begin to instruct me, please!” The patriarch said, “Do not think in terms of ‘good’ and ‘evil.’ Right when you achieve this, what will Head-Monk Ming’s true face be?” With these words, Ming experienced a great enlightenment. Sweat covered his body. He cried and bowed, saying: “Besides these secret words and meanings that you have offered me, is there an even deeper teaching?” The patriarch replied: “What I have told you now is no secret at all. If you reflect and see your own true face,[2] the ‘secret’ will then be with you.” Ming said, “Even though this monk was part of Huangmei’s congregation, he had in fact yet to see his true face. Through your benevolent guidance, today I reached this place. It is like someone who drinks water and knows for himself whether it is warm or cold. Now, the one walking is this monk’s teacher.” The patriarch replied: “You may think this, but both you and I have Huangmei as our teacher. Mindfully guard and sustain what you have received.”

[1] “The bowl and the robe”: The symbols of his authority as patriarch, transmitted to him by his predecessor.

[2] “Your own true face,” that is, your true nature.

Since its mysterious emergence in the watery entrails of the ocean, life has been unceasingly driven by the opposition between the self and

the other, the inside and the outside, the subject and the object. Life indubitably forms a totality, but each living being experiences the world only through the flow of its own senses, perceiving it from a singular perspective, anchored to a body, and attached to a particular location on the earth and a time linked to the falling of the grains of sand of the celestial hourglass. The narrowness of this horizon, this permanently constrained landscape, kindles the fire of desire within the nerves or the minds of these beings, where the stream of the senses is turned into a world, either crude or complex, where meaning is built and sought. Survival, the perpetuation of their being, or pleasure, these are the different facets of desire driving their existence, allowing them to pass on their most fundamental legacy, a portion of their very flesh, to a new generation. Being oblivious to the nature of being, which transcends all individuality, they ferociously strive against their brethren and cousins. They forcefully appropriate things and extinguish lives to get ahead of others and see their self being exalted among their peers, being rewarded with the bodies of the vanquished for their mercilessness, while surges of pleasurable substances flow through their flesh, gratifying their minds. Such is the existence of the slave of life, of the bondservant to the world, the captive to the self.

Driven by his most deeply entrenched instincts, the root of life, the greedy may therefore steal earthly creations and appropriate worldly ideas for his personal benefit, but there is one thing that cannot be forcefully taken from others, as it is an absence rather than a presence, an absence that is more precious than any possession. The poor of the earth, having no-thing, leaves the robber powerless and frustrated. Having completely let go of the world, having distanced himself from all things, he does not even distinguish life from death, and thus even the sharpest knife would not be enough to deprive him of his life. The most absolute poverty therefore surpasses the greatest wealth, granting absolute power by not being bound to the power of the world and the men obstinately wielding it. Fortunately, even the most envious dweller of the world, seized by an uncontrollable jealousy, seeing his self being humiliated by what he perceives to be the exaltation of another, his defeat at the great game of life, may still amend his ways, a prelude to the discovery of the way of the sky.

The man of the world beholds his own self in a mirror, but the man of the way only sees the clear sky itself, no mirror, no self, and no speck of dust of the world. To refrain from shattering the perfect unicity of the sky with the sword of reason, this is the first step. One must forget the words “yes” and “no,” “good” and “evil,” letting the sky be as it is, encompassing all that is in perfect seamlessness, without the slightest trace of separation. The last step is the collapse of the last wall, the one dividing the inside from the outside, the self and the other. Then

can a true illumination occur, with the sky finally unobstructed by the things created by the mind of the living or left as an inheritance by the dead. Then can one's true face be seen, not in a mirror, but rather in the whole of the heavens. Pervaded by this awareness, the springtime of his existence can then arrive. The great life can now begin, and the darkness of death can be left behind. White lilies sprout from the melting snow; blades of freshly grown grass are covered in dew, glistening like innumerable emerald threads in the light of dawn, while a murmuration of starlings elegantly hovers over a translucent river calmly carrying winter's ice to the salty womb of the sea —his own true face is this splendid scenery, seen in its totality rather than a mere aggregate of things, seen as the seamless whole where the living and the dead cannot be discerned from one another, where the earth is merged with the heavens, and the inside is harmoniously blended with the outside. This revelation was never concealed. It has always been readily apparent. He only had to open his eyes and let go of things to behold its vivifying truth.

Case 21 —There Is No Teacher —只是無師

Source: The Blue Cliff Record Case 11.

This case is identical to the Book of Serenity, case 53.

【中】

jǔ huáng bò shì zhòng yún rǔ děng zhū rén jìn shì chuáng jiǔ zāo
舉。黄檗 示眾云：「汝等諸人，盡是噇[1] 酒糟
hàn rèn me xíng jiǎo hé chù yǒu jīn rì huán zhī dà táng guó lǐ wú chán
漢，恁麼行脚，何處有今日。[2] 還知大唐國裏無禪
shī ma shí yǒu sēng chū yún zhī rú zhū fāng kuāng tú lǐng zhòng yòu zuò
師麼。」時有僧出云：「只如諸方匡[3] 徒領眾，又作
me shēng bò yún bú dào wú chán zhī shì wú shī
麼生。」檗 云：「不道無禪，只是無師。」

[1] 【噇】 S:【噇】 [chuáng]: "to eat" / "to drink."

[2] 【今日】 [jīn rì]: literally "today," but here apparently designating the realm hidden by the walls of things of the world, the "Nirvana" that is here and now, but which the men of the world fail to perceive.

[3] 【匡】 [kuāng]: "to rectify." As it is used in this case, this word may be more precisely defined as "to instruct by pointing out the errors [of the disciples]."

【日】

こ おうばく しゅ しめ いわ なんじらしょにん ことごと
舉す。黄檗、衆に示して云く、「汝等諸人、盡く
こ とうしゅそう おとこ いんも あんぎゃ いずこ
是れ噇酒糟の漢なり。恁麼に行脚せば、何處にか

今日あらん。還た大唐國裏に禪師無きことを知るや。」時に僧あり出でて云く、「只だ諸方の徒を匡し衆を領いるが如きは、又た作麼生。」檗云く、「禪無しとは道ず、只是れ師無し。」

【E】

Huangbo, instructing the assembly, said, “You are drinkers of lees, all of you! If you continue to peregrinate like this, where will the ‘today[1] ’ be? Do you even know that in this great empire of Tang, there is no Zen teacher?” At this moment, a monk came forward and said, “But everywhere there are people helping disciples and guiding congregations. What about them?” Huangbo said, “I do not say that there is no Zen; I only say that there is no teacher.”

[1] “Today,” that is, the realm of Nirvana, of the quenching of the self, which is here and now, within the reach of all beings, at all times.

Delving into gigantic piles of scrolls, or eagerly drinking the eloquent words uttered by others, all depicting their experiences, their journey of liberation from the delusions of the world, one may come to think that these tales represent genuine substitutes for such personal experiences. But to meticulously read a detailed map is not the same as undertaking the journey through the land it describes, nor do the precious pieces of advice and benevolent guidance of the men of the way represent an enlightenment. The drinker of lees has yet to taste the sweetness of the wine and feel the inebriation that comes with the flowing of the fermented blood of the fruits of the earth through his veins, pervading the entirety of his flesh, but being ignorant, he fails to see that the lees differ from the wine.

The neophyte may nonetheless be seized by a thirst for a variety of experiences, seeking them by extensively wandering across the earth, visiting the masters of what he considers his art. He guzzles their expertly crafted discourses and imitates their skillful behavior, but, constantly standing in their shadow, he finds the light of truth concealed by what he sees as a source of illumination, seeing a brilliant halo surrounding

these men, mistaking what conceals and dims the light for the source of radiance itself. He begs other men for the dregs, but every step he takes is in a lake of the most succulent elixir, graciously offered by nature itself. What he seeks is not to be found at another corner of the earth, drawn out of the voluble mouth of a teacher, or extracted out of a piece of worn-out parchment written by the lords of bygone eras. The luxuriant paradise he desperately yearns for is always right in front of him, waiting to be discovered. It is "today," "here": what is given to him to feel, first-hand, without any mediation whatsoever. One may write entire libraries describing in detail the delicate scent of a rose to someone deprived of the sense of olfaction from birth, but these mountains of words would be instantly superseded by a mere flash of the smell of the flower's unique fragrance. This scent, this light, and this sound are here with us today. Yesterday is a haphazard heap of blurry memories, and the morrow is a dream, a fictitious product of our fertile imagination. Only the present is within the reach of our senses, and only it can show us the way.

Gulping the ocean, whose waves are stirred up by the moon to the last drop, and swallowing the incandescent sun and the most distant stars until all that is left in the world is the most absolute darkness, is how the newcomer to the way may discover the bliss of inebriation that comes with the great liberation. Growing together with the trees budding at the first signs of spring, sprouting out of the earth at each instant, and giving fruit that feeds the whole of life, is what freedom is, freedom from the yoke of the self, the narrowness of one's horizon. No matter how skilled and how willing a brother is to help, the blindfold placed over the eyes of each one of us during our infancy is too thick and tight to be removed by another. Only when the head shrinks into an insignificant speck of dust will it naturally fall down to the ground, with this speck of dust then carried by the air, indistinguishable from the ethereal substance forming the heavens.[20] and thus the pilgrim often clumsily falls into the quicksand of words and illusions. There is nothing to be learned, and no piece of earth is more sacred than another. Every word ever uttered is a scripture, and every step is taken onto hallowed ground, if only one opens up his eyes and sees that he is in heaven and that this place is devoid of any *thing*. When all has been drunk to the last drop, nothing remains. What is left is no-thing. As soon as one opens his mouth to ask, he becomes deaf, but when he finally embraces silence, he will then begin to hear the great answer. The way is the vanishing of words, and words mark the vanishing of the way.[21] There

[20]See Yuanwu's commentary on this case: "The more one seeks, the more he doesn't see. The more one bears, the more he sinks down," Chinese original: 「愈尋愈不見。愈擔荷愈沒溺。」, From: 《佛果圜悟禪師碧巖錄》。 CBETA (Case 11).

[21]See: Villalba, Dokusho. *Hekiganroku. Crónicas del Acantilado Azul.* Miraguano Ediciones. 1994. Page 52: "El Zen es el fin del discurso. El discurso es el fin del Zen. El fin del discurso es el Zen. El fin del Zen es el discurso. El discurso del fin es el Zen. El discurso del Zen es el fin. El del es fin Zen discurso el. Zen del es el discurso

is no teacher of the way of the sky but the way itself, right in front of us, as always. Heavily intoxicated by the medicine of the world that give rises to the sweet illusion of the self, and inebriated by the most potent pharmakon of the earth and the sky that dispels this delusion of the self through a sublime ecstasy from it, we experience the counteracting and the interplay of both, which allows us to perceive the elation of the exposure to what "today" is.

Case 22 —The Great Talk About the Great Death —大死大話

Source: The Blue Cliff Record Case 41.

This case is identical to the Book of Serenity, case 63.

【中】

jǔ zhào zhōu wèn tóu zǐ dà sǐ dì rén què huó shí rú hé
舉。趙州 問 投子：「大死底人，却活時如何。」
tóu zǐ yún bù xū yè xíng tóu míng xū dào
投子 云：「不許夜行，投明[1] 須到。」

[1] 【投明】 [tóu míng]: "the break of dawn."

【日】

こ じょしゅう とうす と だいしてい ひと かえ
舉す。趙州、投子に問う、「大死底の人、却って
かつ とき いかん とうす いわ やこう ゆる めい
活する時如何。」投子云く、「夜行を許さず、明に
とう すべか いた
投じて須らく到るべし。」

【E】

Zhaozhou asked Touzi: "How is it when a man who has died the great death[1] comes back to life?" Touzi said, "One should not walk about in the night. The first rays of dawn will arrive soon."

[1] "The great death," that is, the death of the ego, of the deluded self, prelude to a rebirth as an enlightened man.

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fin el. etc. tec. cet. tce. ..."

As the unceasing turning of the gigantic celestial wheels continues, our home planet revolves around the great luminary that feeds life with its fiery splendor; this small orb bowing in front of this giant sphere of fire and thereby marking the seamless succession of the seasons on its surface. The fall of the reddened foliage of the forests, exposing the crooked branches to the cool zephyr, is a sign of death, the quenching of the fire of life, with the frigid winter leaving only haphazardly scattered embers standing out from the pristine white coat laid over the earth. When man ceases to grasp the profusion of things both assisting and burdening him, those things immediately drop to the ground, revealing his nakedness, and finally allow him to see himself, without being covered by his possessions, belonging both to the earth and to the world. The abrupt fall of man, the total collapse of his world, occurring suddenly when his will to support it finally wavers, is a walk toward the great death, the winter of the mind, when all colors fade into pure darkness, and all shapes are veiled under a thick blanket of icy flakes poured down by fleecy clouds.

Far from the end of one's being, the great death is rather the uncovering of its truth. Stripped of all things, the only thing that remains is his self, and this represents a unique opportunity to let this last thing go as well. Only what one knows to be his possession may be given up, and thus the revelation of one's bare face is a prerequisite to being free from the burden of one's own individuality, ceasing to be a mere beholder of the light, instead realizing that one is light itself. Utter darkness then cannot be discerned from total brightness. The winter marries the summer, and life is one with death, tightly interwoven, one into the other. Having let go of all things, serenely abiding in indiscrimination, perfect light or complete obscurity, dispossessed of his self, the incomparable satisfaction that is felt is yet impossible to share with others while one remains in this blissful state. Dwelling in the shadows, he cannot be seen, and thus his existence leaves no traces upon the lives of others.

The one who has survived the harshness of winter is, all the same, called to educate the summer children so that they may also be prepared for it, embracing it without fear or apprehension. The one who has experienced the death of the self is in the best position to point out the essence of life to the men who are unaware of its omnipresent nature. Composedly stepping out of the darkness, incarnating the first rays of the dawn, the dead man resurrects and boldly walks back into the lively streets filled with blinding light. He answers the naïve or malicious questions of the vagabonds, and points the shadows with his finger, seldom noticed by them, inviting them to stretch their bodies and minds between light and shadow, the world of things and no-thing-ness,

experiencing the contrast between these two mysterious poles of being, before letting this contrast also disappear into the infinite chasm out of which all things are born.

Case 23 —Everyone Has a Radiance —人人盡有光明在

Source: The Blue Cliff Record Case 86.

【中】

jǔ yún mén chuí yǔ yún rén rén jìn yǒu guāng míng zài kàn shí bú
舉。雲門垂語云：「人人盡有光明在。看時不
jiàn àn hūn hūn zuò me shēng shì zhū rén guāng míng zì dài yún chú kù sān
見暗昏昏。作麼生是諸人光明。」自代云：「厨庫三
mén yòu yún hǎo shì bù rú wú
門。」又云：「好事不如無。」

【日】

こ うんもん すいご いわ にんにんとごと こうみょう
擧す。雲門、垂語して云く、「人人盡く光明の
あ あ み とき み あんこんこん いかなる
在る有り。看る時は見えず暗昏昏たり。作麼生か
こ しょにん こうみょう みずか かわ いわ ず く さんもん
是れ諸人の光明。」自ら代って云く、「厨庫、三門。」
ま いわ こうじ な し
又た云く、「好事は無きに如かず。」

【E】

Yunmen, giving instruction, said, “Everyone has his own radiance. When you try to look [at it], you cannot see [it] —only utter darkness. What is this radiance of man?” He himself replied: “The kitchen; the temple’s entrance gate.”[1] Again, he said, “No-thing is preferable to good things.”

[1] “The entrance gate”: Literally, “the three gates,” which are found at the entrance of Buddhist monasteries.

So bright and pervasive is the light of the world that it eclipses the one burning within the heart of man, the innermost lamp shining over his surroundings. Even when he succeeds in dimming the blinding glare of the things around him, he cannot see this source of brilliance, but rather sees only the scattered rays reflected upon the earthly creations of man or nature. Attempting to shed light upon light, all that he sees is uniformity, brightness equal to darkness in the absence of form or color. No matter where it shines, light nonetheless remains true to its nature. The source is no different from the destination, and as its glow is diffused all around, revealing the objects whereon it is reflected, it is seen as an image, something that is more than mere radiance, as it is light carrying a particular depiction of the world.

When one has perceived the nature of the light, seeing that the brilliance coming out of his own essence is the same as that of the sun and the stars, the one pervading the serpentine rivers covering the dry land while nourishing the leaves and the grasses near their shores, fostering their growth, then can one see his own true face, reflected in the countless objects of the world made by the hands of man, or by the various branches of the majestic tree of life. It is in what is closest to us that our own nature may be revealed most clearly. The door of our home separates the intimate from the open world or from the kitchen wherein we prepare the food that sustains our body several times a day. It is in everydayness that the self may most certainly be found. It uncovers itself when one is least expecting to observe it, coming close to the one whose mind is free from desire and ambition, one who lets the light of his self become a gentle glow, like the glow of the moon during the most obscure hours of the night, rather than a blazing sun that floods the earth with the most ardent flames, blinding those impudent and imprudent enough to behold its countenance. What is the light of the self, one may ask? It is the most insignificant object present in our life, or the most exalted possession of our branch of life. It is the dust covering the feet of the indigent, or the golden statue adorning the holiest of holies of a tribe. It is the cup in which we drink the liquid of life, or the clothes wrapped around our shoulders. Even in the experience of seeing or hearing the very words designating these things, one may see manifestations of his most essential nature, emanation of his self, a radiation of the primordial nature of the whole of the earth and the skies.

To see one's own reflection in the vast heaps of things of the world may come as a seemingly insignificant and yet life-changing event, a profound revelation changing the course of one's existence, one's whole outlook upon life itself and his own self. It may be the best thing in his life, the most precious gift offered to him by the world, and yet, it does not equal the extreme peacefulness that comes with the extinction of the last sparks of the self, the release of all things of the world. Better than

even the best thing in this world is to become no-thing-ness itself, what remains when all has been let go of. It is in the self's own annihilation, when it is fused with everything else, that it finally appears in its truth. But even then, all appears unchanged, and yet *no-thing* is all that is perceived, with the golden sun and the silvery moon, the dark earth and the bright stars, all seen clearly and yet not a single thing distinguished from another. The self then is fully one with the whole, and being itself ceases to be a mere idea and becomes a sensation, reaching from the very beginning of time until its ultimate end.

Case 24 —Medicine and Disease Strive Against Each Other —藥病相治

Source: The Blue Cliff Record Case 87.

【中】

jǔ yún mén shì zhòng yún yào bìng xiāng zhì jìn dà dì shì yào
舉。雲門示眾云：「藥病相治。[1] 盡大地是藥，
nà gè shì zì jǐ
那箇是自己。」

[1] 【治】: "to control" / "to treat a disease." Its use here emphasizes the fact that both medicine and disease interact with one another, forming two opposite but complementary poles.

【日】

こ うんもん しゅ しめ いわ やくびょうあいち
舉す。雲門、衆に示して云く、「藥病相治す。
じんだいち こ やく いずれ こ じこ
盡大地是れ藥。那箇か是れ自己。」

【E】

Yunmen, instructing the assembly, said, "Medicine and disease strive against each other. The entire earth is a medicine. What is your self?"

Afflicted with a sickness, the mind or the body degrades, unable to perform what it is meant to do, impeded in its activities by an invisible weight, a burden that cannot simply be cast away by a mere act of

volition or a movement of the limbs. Time, the work of the skies, is the most fundamental cure for every affliction, but for every sickness, there is also a medicine, a counterweight to the burden placed upon one's neck. The medicine strives against the disease, and the disease struggles against the medicine. They both attempt to subdue one another, neutralizing each other's power, and when the battle finally ends, nothing remains of either, leaving only a healthy being after their passage.

A medicine is a potent substance, a weapon placed in the hands of man, one that he can use as he sees fit. Its nature is nonetheless tied to its use, as a medicine may often reveal itself to be a poison, just as a poison may prove to be a medicine if expertly used. The line between the two is blurry, and the distinction is an arbitrary mental construct, a thing of the world. Furthermore, to be attached to such a distinction is itself a disease.[22]

For the man of the world, caught in the mire of things, wading through them all day long without even being conscious that this world is only a construction of mankind rather than the truth of nature, the self may be seen as a disease. It has snatched up his mind and led him to view himself as an entity standing out from the rest of the earth and the skies around him. All is cleaved between the inside and the outside, the self and the other, and to this condition afflicting him, contact and intimacy with the earth may be the surest remedy. Pitted against each other by the world, the self and the earth appear to be struggling to overcome one another. Eating the earth itself, letting it enter his body and his heart as he tears it apart piece by piece, he realizes that he is the great earth! It flows into his veins, and it forms the bones allowing him to rise above the ground and proudly stand to face the countenance of the fountainhead of fire adorning the firmament. His standing out from it is a mere illusion, a mirage skillfully painted by the world itself. Having swallowed the earth, the self appears to fade away, giving way to the union of both the swallower and the swallowed. When the world collides with the earth, *no-thing* is left as a result of this encounter. The world, the self standing in it, and even the earth itself then cease to be, as things bearing names and tied to countless other things. No-thing-ness is then experienced, without separation between the self and the earth, between medicine and disease, between cure and poison.

For the dweller in no-thing-ness, the man of the earth who has erased all the lines of separation, a rejection of the self and the world, a denial of their existence, and a denigration of the role they play in man's life may nonetheless also become a disease. To grasp no-thing-ness itself is no different from clutching pieces of gold in one's hands or feverishly

[22]See: 吳平。《新譯碧巖集》。台北：三民書局股份有限公司,2005. (Case 90)：「藥與病是相對的兩樣事物，轉指凡夫的相對二見。修行者能減除藥與病的妄想，才能算是真出家。」

cherishing ideas in one's heart, horrified at the thought of letting them go. The remedy to this plague is then to cut out the wound, to cleave nothingness to let the world rise up again from the earth and let the self be enthroned over it. The disease of one era is the cure of another, and the poison of one day is the medicine of the morrow. To stay healthy, man must remain on the move, not letting his body or his mind grow rigid, falling prey to the illusion that he is whole and free. To see oneself as healthy is already a sickness, but so is seeing oneself as afflicted. Embracing the medicine as poison, the poison as medicine, one ceases to distinguish sickness from health, light and darkness. He instead embraces their distinction when it presents itself before his eyes, as a manifestation of the course of nature, and he may then realize that the substance has truly penetrated his self, infecting him with an authentic life, curing him with a true death.

Case 25 —Linji's True Man —臨濟真人

Source: The Book of Serenity Case 38.

【中】

jǔ lín jì shì zhòng yún yǒu yì wú wèi zhēn rén chángxiàng rǔ děng
舉。臨濟 示眾云：「有一無位真人，常向汝等
miàn mén chū rù chū xīn wèi zhèng jù zhě kàn kàn shí yǒu sēng wèn rú hé
面門出入。初心未證據者看看。」時有僧問：「如何
shì wú wèi zhēn rén jì xiè chánchuáng qín zhù zhè sēng nǐ yì jì
是無位真人。」濟 下禪床擒[1] 住這僧擬議。[2] 濟
tuō kāi yún wú wèi zhēn rén shì shèn gān shǐ jué
托開云：「無位真人，是甚乾屎橛。」[3]

[1] 【擒】 S:【擒】 [qín]: "to grab."

[2] 【擬議】 [nǐ yì]: "to ponder the meaning [of something], being unsure."

[3] 【乾屎橛】 S:【干屎橛】 [gān shǐ jué]: a stick used to scrape excrements, found in latrines.

【日】

こ りんざい しゅ しめ いわ いち むい しんにん
舉す。臨濟、衆に示して云く、「一無位の眞人あ
つね なんじら めんもん むか しゅつにゅう しょしん みしょう
り、常に汝等が面門に向って出入す、初心未證
こ もの み み とき そう と いか
據の者は看よ看よ。」時に僧ありて問う、「如何な
こ むい しんにん さい ぜんじょう くだ きんじゅう
るか是れ無位の眞人。」濟、禪牀を下って擒住す。

這の僧擬議す。濟、托開して云く、「無位の眞人是れ甚の乾屎橛ぞ。」

【E】

Linji, instructing the assembly, said, “There is a true man without position, constantly coming out and going in through the gates of your face.[1] Beginners who have yet to witness that —look!” At this moment, a monk asked: “What is the true man without position?” Linji descended from the rostrum and grabbed him. The monk was trying to understand the meaning of this, but Linji pushed him away and said, “Hey, true man without position, what a dry shit stick you are!”

[1] “The gates of your face,” that is, the senses.

A true man is a free man, liberated from the yoke that weighs down the shoulders of most of the living beings caught between earth and sky, free from the chains binding them to a piece of earth, to a parcel of the world. He is someone who sees beyond the cramped horizon of his senses, someone who not only lets himself be shaped and built up by the ebbs and flows of the tumultuous and ever-flowing stream passing through his eyes, ears, nose, tongue, or skin, but also lets it pass through, without resistance, without control, letting the turbulent currents of the earth and the sky flood his world to the brim before they return to their source. His mouth then utters this truth that has penetrated his being, and he impassively accompanies the stream as it continues its course. The true man no longer differentiates what comes in from what goes out. He is a person without position within the world, as he has become invisible to its inhabitants and is blind to its hierarchies. Having retreated to the place where there are no kings or beggars, no here and there, he is lost to the world but has finally found himself.[23]

Stripped of the garments he has worn day and night since infancy, rich in colorful patterns, intricately embroidered characters, and complex imagery, the true man discovers there is no flesh beneath them, no skin

[23] See: “The word ‘position’ (in ‘person of no position’) is often understood to mean our status in society. In this case, it also means our exact location in space and time.” From: Thich Nhat Hanh. *Nothing to Do, Nowhere to Go. Waking up to who you are.* Parallax Press, 2007.

or bones. As soon as the last piece of clothing is thrown onto the ground, the fresh breeze of the springtime blows away what remains, and all that is left is what is encompassed by the sky itself. Then comes a revelation: the true man is not a man at all, as he lacks what makes a living thing human.[24] Lacking a position, on the earth, in the world, or in the skies, he is the great tide of the senses itself, the great torrent that infiltrates the innermost parts of the living, occupying the mind of the inhabitants of the world.

In order to be appreciated, the truth must nonetheless be contrasted with falsehood. The true man only exists by his opposition to the inauthentic man, the slave of the world and of his own self. The true man thus benevolently leaves unostentatious traces of his passage through the world. He undermines its foundations, built on quicksand, built on clouds. He shakes the fetters of the prisoner, attempting to awaken him as their rattle resonates through his cell, calling upon the true man hidden within the prisoner's heart to manifest himself. The words of the true man sound harsh because they disregard the values of the world, but they are a tender embrace of a lover of mankind, a liberator, pointing out the meaninglessness of the positions within the buildings produced by their hands and minds. He throws a rusty iron coin to the king, and bows with great reverence to the stray dog. His rebukes are taken for praises, and he compares the one he loves to a stick used to scrape excrement, stunning the simple, yet enlightening the one sufficiently curious about the nature of the world and of his self.

Case 26 —Luoshan's Coming to Be and Destruction —羅山起滅

Source: The Book of Serenity Case 43.

【中】

jǔ luó shān wèn yán tóu qī miè bù tíng shí rú hé tóu
舉。羅山問巖頭：「起滅不停時如何。」頭
duō yún shì shéi qī miè
咄[1] 云：「是誰起滅。」

[1] 【咄】 [duō]: an interjection expressing disapproval.

[24] See: Roloff, Dietrich. *Cong-Rong-Lu – Aufzeichnungen aus der Klause der Gelassenheit: Die 100 Kôan des Shôyôroku.* Windpferd Verlagsgesellschaft mbH, 2008. Page 197: "Und deshalb ist er auch der ‚wahre' Mensch, der freilich zugleich gar kein ‚Mensch' ist, weil es ihm an allen Eigenschaften fehlt, die einen Menschen zum Menschen machen."

【日】

舉(こ)す。羅山(らざん)、巖頭(がんとう)に問(と)う、「起滅不停(きめつふてい)の時(とき)如何(いか)ん。」頭(とう)、咄(とっ)して云(いわ)く、「是(こ)れ誰(だれ)か起滅(きめっ)す。」

【E】

Luoshan asked Yantou: "What if things[1] unceasingly come into being and are destroyed?" Yantou marked his disapproval, saying: "Who is it that causes things to come into being and to be destroyed?"

[1] "What if things": The original only mentions a process of coming to being and destruction, but neither the subject nor the object of these actions, leaving the sentence open to interpretation.

The eye of the man living a secluded existence within the citadel of things formed by the mind from the stream of his senses is continuously engulfed in the whirlwind of history, an unceasing succession of rises and falls of civilizations, of peoples, and even branches of the grandiose tree of life. New generations sprout from the loins of their parents, and the old are ineluctably replaced by the young, as lords and servants equally turn into ashes, penetrating into the ground out of which the flowers of the spring will proudly rise, facing the brilliance of our gilded star. Contemplating the inevitable decay of all that is born, the unavoidable collapse of all that is painstakingly and obstinately built by the living, many are prone to despair, seized by a sense of the vacuity of their existence that strangles them and causes the vaults of their eyes to open, with ample tears then running down their cheeks and into the shadowy depths of the earth.

Far away from the high and sturdy ramparts of the citadel of things, in the seemingly infinite expanse of the great desert, where not a single thing is found but where truth is omnipresent, there the quenching of all coming to being and destruction may be witnessed.[25] The frontiers between life and death, one person and another, are arbitrary products of the mind. Each one of us was born out of a mother, formed by the mingling of the essence of our parents, without a clear and definite

[25] See this passage of the Heart Sutra: "All things have the form of emptiness. They neither emerge nor are destroyed. They are neither pure nor impure. They do not increase nor decrease." Original Chinese: 「諸法空相，不生不滅，不垢不淨，不增不減。」 From: 《般若波羅蜜多心經》。 CBETA .

moment marking a separation between us and them. Life as a whole thus forms a continuous chain, a gigantic being, and even its inception cannot be pinpointed without some degree of arbitrariness. Life indeed is merely a peculiar bewitching of the earth, and the earth itself just an aspect of the skies, carried upon the way.

The key to the total subjugation of suffering, and to the embracing of vacuity, instead of fearing it, thus comes with the awareness of the source of these things. Death and destruction are things we created, just like birth and construction. They are the result of the constricted nature of our worldview, focused on our lifespan and our own presence. Broadening our outlook, enlarging our horizon to reach the infinite, we can see that nothing emerges, and nothing is destroyed outside of our mind. What is embraced by the sky is only experiencing a sublime, enduring, and extensive mutation. The heavens breathe and continuously move. The stars revolve in their galaxies, but nothing is new around these countless suns, and all that ever was will forever continue to be, including ourselves, our true essence, unborn and indestructible.

Case 27 —Deshan's Study Completed —德山學畢

Source: The Book of Serenity Case 46.

【中】

jǔ dé shān yuán míng dà shī shì zhòng yún jí jìn qù yě zhí dé
舉。德山圓明 大師示眾云：「及盡去也，直得
sān shì zhū fó kǒu guà bì shàng yóu yǒu yì rén hē hē dà xiào ruò shí cī
三世[1] 諸佛口掛壁上，猶有一人呵呵大笑，若識此
rén cān xué shì bì
人參學事畢。」

[1] 【三世】 [sān shì]: "the three times." This expression designates the past (過去), the present (現在), and the future (未來).

【日】

こ とくさんえんみょうだいし しゅ しめ いわ きゅう
舉す。德山圓明大師、衆に示して云く、「及
じん さ じき え さんぜしょぶつくちへきじょう か
盡し去るや、直に得たり三世諸佛口壁上に掛く
な いちにん あ かかたいしょう も こ
ることを。猶お一人有って呵呵大笑す。若し此の
ひと し さんがく じおわ
人を識らば參學の事畢んぬ。」

【E】

Great Master Deshan Yuanming instructed his assembly and said, "If one reaches the end, one realizes right away that all the Buddhas of the three times[1] have stuck their mouths to the wall.[2] Yet there is still one man who is laughing loudly. If you know this man, you have completed your study."

[1] "The three worlds": See note 1 of the Chinese text.

[2] "Have stuck their mouths to the wall," and thus are unable to speak.

Walking over the craggy face of our spherical planet, the traveler will never reach its end and may continue his journey until his frail, mortal body finally crumbles into dust, never stumbling upon any wall or chasm marking its boundary. Venturing into his world, exploring the realm of all the possibilities offered by the actions of his mind and limbs, the spiritually inclined may combine a work of discovery with a building work for as long as he lives. He may unceasingly walk over the surface of the azure orb upon which we were all born, without ever reaching an end to it, but he may discover a way to transcend this infinite course, by ascending to the skies, opening up a new dimension, like a rodent jumping out of a maze wherein he was trapped. The curious adventurer, pathfinder of the world, may thus realize that while there is no end to the creation and study of things, there still is the possibility of leaving behind things altogether, and thereby step out of the endless maze of the world, finding the boundary of what was thought to be and what appeared boundless.

Language is the maze wherein man is caught from his birth, one that offers him incomparable power, yet also deceives him. Liberation from the delusions induced by language thus demands that one break free from this instrument of thought. This begins when the sweetest words lose their flavor, as their meaning appears increasingly detached from the raw experience of the realm of the senses, the earth, life, and the skies. There indeed comes a point when the ethereal torrents stirred up by the tongue and the stylus slowly turn into an indistinct cyclone of sounds and drawings, as their connection with the world —their meaning —unwinds, and man's bond with his self unravels. Then, even the words of the enlightened become noise, and the discourses of the awakened a mere babbling. This is when their mouths are sealed shut, stuck on the wall separating the world of things from no-thing-ness, the great beyond that is, despite this fact, always with us, within us, the very ground upon which all that we know is built.

One may, even so, endlessly chase after shadows, or run toward rainbows, hoping to grasp them. One may forever bathe in a sea of words, delighting in the infinite possibilities they offer, but the only end that can be reached is the end of things, the breaking of language, when meaning has been exhausted, leaving only vacuity, emptiness, in its stead. Then, when the mind is plunged in the most absolute silence, the complete absence of speech and words, this is when the wall falls, its collapse echoing through the depths of the ground, resonating in the heights of the sky. The voluble tongue can then be swallowed in one gulp, and the worn-out stylus offered back to the earth, as one's studies are complete. No words are heard any longer, but a rumbling for all that becomes increasingly present, slipping through his ears, and shaking his bones. A burst of laughter is heard throughout the air, an expression of the perfect marriage of earth and sky embodied by man, as the muscles in his chest contract to expel the heavenly aether, imparting to this invisible wave the imprint of his innermost emotions, one that predates the construction of the most ancient parts of his world, the most illustrious words crafted by his distant ancestors. In his own laughter, he hears the echo of his true self, the core of his being, far from the convoluted discourses and the bitter disputes of the world. This laugh is itself an echo, resonating together with the first sound, the eternal clamor resulting from the birth of the skies themselves, continuously expanding, the primordial explosion of which we are the sons, with our feeble voices being insignificant harmonics in the chorus of this song of the skies that accompanies those who have silenced all meaning to rejoice in meaninglessness, simply continuing to laugh, appearing mad to those who think they know.

Case 28 —The Wisdom in the Garland Sutra —華嚴經智慧

Source: The Book of Serenity Case 67.

【中】

jǔ huá yán jīng yún wǒ jīn pǔ jiàn yí qiè zhòngshēng jù yǒu rú
舉。《華嚴經》云：「我今普見一切眾生具有如
lái zhì huì dé xiàng dàn yì wàng xiǎng zhí zhuó ér bú zhèng dé
來智慧德相，[1] 但以妄想執著，而不證得。」

[1] 【德相】 [dé xiāng]: "virtuous form / characteristics."

【日】

挙(こ)す。華厳経(けごんきょう)に云(いわ)く、「我今普(われいまあまね)く一切衆生(いっさいしゅじょう)を見(み)るに、如來(にょらい)の智慧(ちえ)徳相(とくしょう)を具有(ぐゆう)す。但妄想執著(ただしもうそうしゅじゃく)を以(も)って證得(しょとく)せず。」

【E】

The Garland Sutra says: “I now see all living beings everywhere, and I see that each one of them possesses the wisdom and the virtuous form of the Tathagata, but because of delusions and attachments, they fail to realize it.”

The virtue of the holy man is to be blind to holiness, to see the sacred intermingled with the profane and the most common interlaced with the extraordinary, by day as well as by night, standing on the peak of the world or in the deepest trench of the earth. To him, each budding leaf emerging from the great body of life, once the snow has melted and the warmth of our star once again floods the ground, is a leaf of the most sacred scriptures, the wondrous book of life, written since the dawn of our planet. To him, the gilded parchments and ornamented scrolls venerated by the kings of the world are given the same respect as the ephemeral traces left by the birds’ feet on the wet sand of the ocean’s shores, brushstrokes of the living, testimonies of the enduring miracle of life. When presented with a piece of scripture, pondering the role it occupies within our world may teach us a more important lesson than what the scripture tells us with words. Let us contemplate this, asking ourselves why we were given these sentences to examine, and what it tells us of our fathers who have made the effort to inscribe them and pass them through the ages so that we may partake of the experience it offered them.

Looking around us, throngs of men are busying themselves with the affairs of the world, while flocks of animals are striving to feed, that they may survive and extend their own existence, through the fathering of offspring. The melodious songs of love and lust of the birds resound through the air, while the insects are crawling in search of the crumbs falling from the tables of mankind, all obeying the calling of their own nature, unostentatiously guided by the book of life itself, the script engraved into each one of their cells with the most minute and marvelously written characters. They know not of the existence of this scripture, but their flesh unknowingly follows its meticulous

instructions, leading them to relentlessly labor for the endurance of life, as the heavenly wheels continue their endless revolutions and contribute to the growth of its gigantic body, creating a wedge between earth and sky.

The virtue and wisdom of the awakened are to embrace the way, to accompany the flow of nature, seeing through it as through the clearest azure sky, in awe of its perfect harmony. All the creatures forming the entire tree of life follow their deeply entrenched instincts, diligently obeying the commands of the greatest book, but few do so with full awareness of the source and destination of these instincts, which go beyond the horizon of their own existence. Even fewer knowingly subsume their life into the way of the sky itself, as they are still attached to this life, which they see as tied to the personal experience offered to them by their senses. Man and all the other branches of the tree of life face the same struggle, this blindness to their own condition, as their will to survive robs them of the authenticity of their being. There is nonetheless ample time for an awakening, as life goes on without interruption, with new generations uninterruptedly born out of the previous one, carrying on the torch of life through the revolutions of the innumerable celestial bodies, with death itself being only a delusion of the world, just like life itself. All is as it is, as it was, and will be, and wisdom consists in seeing this fact clearly.

Case 29 —Nanquan's Cats and Cows —南泉白牯

Source: The Book of Serenity Case 69.

【中】

jǔ nán quán shì zhòng yún sān shì zhū fó bù zhī yǒu lí nú
舉。南泉 示眾云：「三世[1] 諸佛不知有，狸奴[2]
bái gǔ què zhī yǒu
白牯[3] 却知有。」

[1] 【三世】[sān shì]: "the three times." This word designates the past (過去), the present (現在), and the future (未來).

[2] 【貍奴】 S:【狸奴】 [lí nú]: "a cat."

[3] 【牯】 [gǔ]: "a cow" or "a castrated bull."

【日】

こ なんせんしゅ しめ いわ さんぜ しょぶつあ
舉す。南泉衆に示して云く、「三世の諸佛有る

り　ねびゃっこ かえ　　あ　　し
ことをしらず、狸奴白牯却って有ることを知る。」

【E】

Nanquan instructed the assembly and said, “The buddhas of the three times[1] do not know that *there is*, but cats and white cows know that *there is*.”

[1] “The three worlds”: See note 1 of the Chinese text.

The written words from which one learns the most are those whose meaning is left to the reader to construct, those that become a deep well out of which an inexhaustible amount of water can be drawn, taking the color of their environment, letting themselves be shaped by the hand manipulating them. Purposefully throwing such words to his audience, a master is like a good-hearted gardener feeding the hungry sparrows visiting his plot, seeing them hastily swallow nutritious seeds, without paying the slightest attention to their nature.

Man, the paragon of animals, usually lives a life of slumber in his world, dreaming of things, possessions or experiences, eagerly seizing what is presented before him without much reflection, like pigeons searching for their sustenance. Ruled by the whole of life, he is very much like the beasts of the fields feeding on the fruits of the earth or the creatures roaming the woods in search of prey. Like them, he dwells in the realm of perception, swiftly discerning food from the environment, a mate from an enemy, the valuable from the worthless, splitting the earth into numerous pieces, allowing him to comprehend and to subjugate. Thinking highly of himself and his species, the “loftiest branch of the tree of life,” he knows that it alone has been endowed with the saber of reason, the mighty weapon sharpened with the tongue and the quill, even though he is too often oblivious to the extent of his shared nature with the rest of the animals, for rarely heard and read are his own words, and seldom seen are the deeds that would allow him to consider himself above them, to transcend his animality and to stand out, reaching another realm, as most of his existence is filled with vain speech and base behavior. He is nonetheless called to undertake the task of rising above all other living beings, leaving behind the trivialities of his world, the comfortable state of slumber to which he is so often accustomed, to open wide his eyes and behold what was there all along, but to which he had yet to awaken.

The awakened sees beyond the things of the world, and what lies beyond is so enthralling that he grows to ignore these things, to slowly

become blind to the objects, persons, and ideas that are constantly passing before his eyes or through his mind, before he finally becomes oblivious to them. In contrast to him, the sleeping beast or the slumbering man lives an existence filled with the awareness of what *is*, what is found within his world. The dormant knows who he is, and that he is, caught between earth and sky, but the awakened first realizes that he does not know, and soon enough ceases to know even that. Standing out from the flat surface of the world, like from the page of a book, he finds that there is nothing to know. Knowledge cannot endure beyond this surface, and it vanishes without being noticed, as there is no longer any need for it. The very distinction between man and beast, awakened or dormant, being and non-being, then ceases to be.[26]

As soon as one thinks he has understood it, it instantly slips beyond reach. Knowledge makes its ineluctable return within the mind of man, and the lullaby of the world once more resounds in his attentive ears, weighing on his eyelids. The awakened and the slumbering man may perhaps be those who fail to know what being is, whereas the humble beasts filling the land, far from the cities erected by those who proudly deem themselves superior to them, may be the only creatures that can experience a form of true being, letting themselves be completely engulfed in the raw experience of the earth and life, without superfluous reflection, without arrogance and without pride, simply following the flow in which they are caught, never resisting, never questioning, simply going forward until they completely exhaust their strength and succumb to their age or their wounds, then peacefully reentering the clayey body of the earth.

Case 30 —Jinshan Inquires About Life — 進山問性

Source: The Book of Serenity Case 70.

【中】

jǔ jìn shān zhǔ wèn xiū shān zhǔ yún míng zhī shēng bù shēng xìng
舉。進山 主問 脩山 主云：「明知生不生性，
wèi shén me wèi shēng zhī suǒ liú xiū yún sūn bì jìng chéng zhú qù
為甚麼，為生之所留。」脩 云：「筍畢竟成竹去。
rú jīn zuò miè shǐ huán dé ma jìn yún rǔ xiàng hòu zì wù qù
如今作篾[1] 使還得麼。」進 云：「汝向後自悟去
zài xiū yún mǒu jiǎ zhī rú cī shàng zuò yì zhī rú hé jìn
在。」脩 云：「某甲只如此。上座意旨如何。」進

[26]See: 神保如天. 《從容録通解》。東京：無我山房, 1915. Page 451 (Case 69).

yún zhè gè shì jiān yuàn fáng nà gè shì diǎn zuò fáng xiū biàn lǐ bài
云：「這箇是監[2] 院房，那箇是典座房。」脩 便禮拜。

[1] 【篾】 [miè]: “bamboo splints” (used to weave baskets).

[2] 【監】 S:【监】 [jiān]: “a supervisor.”

【日】

こ しんざんしゅ しゅざんしゅ と いわ あきら
擧す。進山主、脩山主に問うて云く、「明か
しょう ふしょう しょう し なん し
に生は不生の性なることを知らば、甚麼と爲てか
しょう ため と しゅいわ たかんびなっきょうたけ
生の爲に留めらるるや。」脩云く、「筍畢竟竹と
な さ にょこんけなは な つか かえ え
成り去る、如今篾と作して使うこと還って得て
しんいわ なんじこうごみずか さと さ あ
んや。」進云く、「汝向後自ら悟り去ること在ら
しゅいわ それがしただかく ごと じょうざ い し いかん
ん。」脩云く、「某甲只此の如し上座の意旨如何。」
しんいわ しゃこ こ かんいんぼう なこ こ てんぞぼう
進云く、「這箇は是れ監院房、那箇は是れ典座房。
しゅ すなわ らいはい
脩、便ち禮拜す。

【E】

Master Jinshan asked Master Xiushan: “When one has clearly understood the unborn nature of life, why does one still wish to remain part of life?” Xiushan said, “The bamboo shoot will eventually become a bamboo. But how would one make bamboo weaving strips out of a bamboo shoot?” Jinshan said, “You will realize it yourself at some point.” Xiushan said, “One’s opinion is just this. What is the elder’s opinion?” Jinshan said, “This is the temple steward’s quarters, and that is the head cooks’ quarters.” Xiushan made a deep bow.

The living appear to stand out so much from the rest of the earth that one easily forgets that the great fire of life is nothing but a peculiar

manifestation of the substance of the earth, an astonishingly complex and marvelous phenomenon, and yet a perfectly natural one. Made of the same stardust, constructed with the same water and soot that already coated our planet eons ago, the entirety of our flesh and the fabric of all branches of the tree of life are nothing but earth, splendidly organized, seemingly bewitched by the most mysterious spell, and yet, just like the splendid flower stands out by its pleasant fragrance and its vivid color from the stem and the roots of a plant, life is nothing but the flower of the earth, the blossom of the rocky stem of the warm globe sheltering us amidst the vast, empty, frigid, and barren expanse of the cosmos. Seen under this light, life is the earth, unborn and immortal, and the earth is but stardust opening up a space and occupying it, part of the heavens themselves, whose fundamental nature nonetheless still escapes us.

Seeing clearly the unborn nature of life, perceiving death in life, life in death, and encompassing the earth, life, and the skies with a single glance, a single thought, being acquainted with their unicity, one should then become aware that his will to survive is an attachment to an illusion. It is to be akin to a flower attempting to resist the ineluctable passing of the seasons, blind to its own nature, which is to be the immortal earth, the infinite sky. Man is never born and will never die, because his essence already existed at the inception of the universe, if there ever was one, and will endure until its end, if it ever comes.

The flowers blossom during the spring and they wither when the sun begins to deny its warmth to the land. The blossoms of the earth, living beings, likewise see their appearance change with the turning of the heavenly wheels, the work of the skies, but their substance and essence remain unchanged. The sapling is no different in nature from the mature tree, and both are utterly useless in their essence. Indeed, only the men of the world have uses for things, whereas the earth and the sky just *are*, useless and without any ambition whatsoever. Seeing the nature of the tree of life thus implies seeing the tree in the sapling, the sapling in the tree, knowing that the distinction between the two is absent on the earth, and only present within the mind of man. In the same manner, the chamber of the novice is just a step away from the quarters of the abbot. Some may think that a gigantic gorge separates the two, a lifetime of effort and dedication, but this would be a mistake. There is just one little step to take to pass from one to the other, a step that may be quicker than the blinking of an eye. Once it is reached, one then sees that both rooms are identical, and that no-thing is found within them.

Case 31 —Zhongyi's Macaque —中邑獼猴

Source: The Book of Serenity Case 72.

【中】

jǔ yǎng shān wèn zhōng yì rú hé shì fó xìng yì yì
舉。仰山 問 中邑：「如何是佛性義。」邑
yún wǒ yǔ ěr shuō gè pì yù rú shì yǒu liù chuāng zhōng ǎn yì mí hóu
云：「我與爾說箇譬喻。如室有六窓中，安一獼猴。
wài yǒu rén huàn yún shēng shēng mí hóu jí yìng rú shì liù chuāng jù huàn jù
[1] 外有人喚云狌狌。[2] 獼猴即應如是六窓俱喚俱
yìng yǎng yún zhī rú mí hóu shuì shí yòu zuò me shēng yì nǎi
應。」仰 云：「只如獼猴睡時，又作麼生。」邑 乃
xià chánchuáng bǎ zhù yún shēngshēng wǒ yǔ ěr xiāng jiàn
下禪床把住云：「狌狌，我與爾相見。」

[1] 【獼猴】 S:【猕猴】 [mí hóu]: “a macaque.”

[2] 【狌狌】 [shēng shēng]: “an orangutan” (also written: 猩猩).

【日】

こ きょうざんちゅうゆう と いか こ
舉す。仰山中邑に問う、「如何なるか是れ
ぶっしょう ぎ ゆういわ われなんじ ため こ ひゆ と
佛性の義。」邑云く、「我爾が與に箇の譬喩を說か
しつ ろくそう あ うち いち みこう お そと ひと あ
ん。室に六窓有り中に一獼猴を安く、外に人有り
よ しょうじょう い みこうすなわ おう こ ごと ろく
て喚んで狌狌と云えば獼猴即ち應ず、是の如く六
そうとも よ とも おう ごと きょういわ ただ
窓俱に喚べば俱に應ずるが如し。」仰云く、「只
みこう ねむ とき ごと また さもさん ゆうすなわ ぜんじょう
獼猴睡る時の如きは又作麼生。」邑乃ち禪牀を
くだ はじゅう いわ しょうじょうわれなんじ しょうけん
下って把住して云く、「狌狌我爾と相見せり。」

【E】

Yangshan asked Zhongyi: “What does ‘Buddha-nature’ mean?” Zhongyi said, “I will explain it to you using a metaphor. Suppose there is a room with six windows, and someone places a macaque inside this room. Outside, someone is shouting: ‘Monkey! Monkey!’ and the macaque reacts, in the same manner, no matter from which window it is called.” Yangshan said, “Suppose the macaque is asleep, what then?” Zhongyi descended from his Zen seat, grasped Yangshan, and said, “Hey monkey! You and I are facing each other right now!”

The most candid question may often reveal itself to be a bottomless pit, into which one may fall and lose oneself. A child innocently inquiring about the most fundamental truth may unwittingly touch the weakest point of the giant constructs built by his forefathers, and cause them to collapse into ruins, even when he is ridiculed for his own weakness and ignorance. To know the truth, to be acquainted with the way of the sky, first demands that one behold his true self. This self is like a creature imprisoned within the boundaries of the body, seeing the world through the openings formed by each one of the senses, the heart-king reigning over a mind and a body[27] When it is called through any of the openings, it reacts in the same manner. The nature of these apertures does not affect the response of this creature, as there is only one being inside, which remains true to its nature, regardless of the hustle and bustle found beyond the walls of its prison. But one day, it may still be suddenly awakened by a voice, realizing that all of this was nothing but a dream.

The realm of dreams is indeed where everything is possible, but where nothing is true. Life on the earth, on the other hand, is replete with constraints, ruled by an order, unalterable by the will of the living. It is true. Our distant ancestors, the apes and their predecessors, were solely ruled by their instincts, endowed with a primitive world vaguely distinguishing the self from the other but remaining ignorant of their own nature. This ape remains buried deep within our hearts, as we also obey the commands of our instincts, attached to our heart-king, seeing ourselves as the center of our monumental world, because we experience it through the windows of our body. Man is still more than an ape. He has been given a great gift by life itself: the ability to seek to perceive his own nature, to examine the creature imprisoned inside the walls, and to seek to identify the voice calling it from the outside. Man's self is a prisoner of his body, but his mind can yet wander out of this cage, passing through its bars without hindrance. When he closes his eyes, bathed in absolute silence, retreating into the world of sleep, the flow of his senses passing through his body is almost reduced to naught. Another, all the same, emerges, a flow gushing out of the depths of his mind itself. Cut off from the earth, this world is still full of sensations, with visions harmoniously married with sounds, fragrances, tastes, and touch, with him unable to distinguish truth from falsehood, earth and world. Wielding the tremendous power of reason, the ground of his world is shaken to its foundation by the realization of the deceitfulness of the senses, and he may then become aware of the illusory nature of the cage and the creature inside it.

[27]See: 神保如天. 《從容録通解》。東京：無我山房, 1915. Page 467 (Case 72).

To see one's true face is to see the ape at the root of our being in the eyes of our parents and brethren. It is to hear its answer to our calling in the rumbling of the waves violently crashing onto the sandy shore. It is to realize that the ape is calling itself, its voice merely echoing between the immense walls delimiting the heavens, creating a mirage, deceiving us into thinking that there is more than one creature, an inside and an outside. Slumbering, neither sleeping nor awake, neither fully on the earth nor in the world, during the twilight of consciousness, this is when "it" may be finally experienced.

Case 32 —Emperor Tongguang's Helmet Hood —光帝幞頭

Source: The Book of Serenity Case 97.

【中】

jǔ tóng guāng dì wèi xīng huà yuē guǎ rén shōu dé zhōng yuán
舉。同光帝謂興化曰：「寡人[1]收得中原[2]
yì bǎo zhī shì wú rén chóu jià huà yún jiè bì xià bǎo kàn
一寶。只是無人酬價。」[3] 化云：「借陛下寶看。」
dì yǐ liǎng shǒu yīn fú tóu jiǎo huà yún jūn wáng zhī bǎo shéi gǎn chóu
帝以兩手引幞頭[4] 脚化云：「君王之寶誰敢酬
jià
價。」

[1] 【寡人】 [guǎ rén]: a first-person pronoun used by the emperor and the nobility.

[2] 【中原】[zhōng yuán]: "the Central Plain." The central part of ancient China, including Henan, western Shandong, southern Shanxi and Hebei.

[3] 【酬價】 S:【酬价】 [chóu jià]: "to set a price [on something]."

[4] 【幞頭】[fú tóu]: A type of helmet hood with four straps used since the Tang dynasty. (See: 「朝服に用いた冠。唐の4脚の紐をつけた被り物を模したもの。」From: 新村出. 《広辞苑第七版》。東京：岩波書店, 2018.)

【日】

こ どうこうてい きょうげ い いわ か じんちゅうげん
舉す。同光帝、興化に謂って云く、「寡人中原の
いっぽう おさ え ただ こ ひと あたい むくい な
一寶を收め得たり。只是れ人の價を酬る無し。」
け いわ へいか たから か み ていりょうしゅ もっ
化云く、「陛下の寶を借せ看ん。」帝兩手を以て
ぼくとうきゃく ひ け いわ くんのう たからだれ あえ あたい
幞頭脚を引く。化云く、「君王の寶誰か敢て價を
むく
酬いん。」

【E】

Emperor Tongguang spoke to Xinghua, saying: "I have received the first treasure of the Central Plain,[1] but no one can set a price on it." Xinghua said, "Your Majesty, please lend it to me so that I may look at it." The emperor pulled the straps of his helmet hood with both hands. Xinghua said, "Who dares to set a price on the sovereign king's treasure!"

[1] "The Central Plain": See note 2 of the Chinese text.

What is the most precious is priceless. It is what cannot be offered or snatched away, what is safe from the hands of the covetous and cannot be reproduced by the brush of a painter or the words of a poet. A dominion is defined by its borders, enclosing the land that is possessed and ruled by its lord, but even within the widest walls, an enclosure remains a boundary, a horizon to the eyes, and a frontier to the body. A rare treasure for a sovereign is the collapse of the walls surrounding what belongs to him, the collapse of the boundaries, expanding his field of view and offering him a vision of the whole of the earth. Extended to the unexplored confines of the earth, the dominion of the ruler becomes meaningless. Possessing everything, he realizes that he possesses nothing. Only then does he become a genuine son of the heavens, born out of the marriage of earth and sky, holding the fiery sun and the ashy moon in his vigorous hands, with the scintillating constellations forming the jewels of the crown adorning his head.

When the walls fall down to the ground, the eyes can finally reach the stars. When the shade of the rampart no longer veils the countenance of the unequaled sun, its light runs through the streets, slipping into the smallest cracks, chasing away the darkness to leave only clarity in its stead. Higher than the rest of the body, and alone endowed with eyes to see, the head is made to lead the whole body toward its destination, and its destiny. Likewise, the head of state who has been awakened by the light shining through the windows of his palace towering over the capital may guide his subjects toward the source of all radiance. The enlightened sovereign is a beacon for the people, fostering the prosperity of his land,[28] but he remains powerless to share his gift, to dispense the light he received directly into the eyes of his subjects. Only through his

[28]See: Roloff, Dietrich. *Cong-Rong-Lu – Aufzeichnungen aus der Klause der Gelassenheit: Die 100 Kôan des Shôyôroku.* Windpferd Verlagsgesellschaft mbH, 2008. Page 501: "Warum aber hat Hong-zhi eine solche Geschichte in seine Sammlung von ‚100 Beispielen der Alten' aufgenommen? Ist sie so etwas wie ein politisches

word and his acts may they perhaps also partake of his glorious vision, his invaluable gem, which is nowhere to be found upon the earth.

To see gold in the mud, to hear the most pleasurable melody in the chaos and clatter of a marketplace, or to see one's own true face in the fresh flowers budding on old, crooked branches, this is one's first treasure. A gaze piercing through all barriers, seeing no high and low, no price or worth, and an undiscerning ear welcoming all sounds equally, reacting to joyful songs in the same manner as to the most unnerving screech, this is the key to the kingdom of heaven, the place where there are no longer rulers or subjects, light or darkness, and not even a single thing. And yet, this is also the place where a son of heaven would rather spend his existence, far from riches and the throngs of greedy men obstinately chasing after them.

Case 33 —Xizhong's Wheels —奚仲造車

Source: The Gateless Barrier Case 8.

【中】

yuè ān hé shàng wèn sēng xī zhòng zào chē yì bǎi fú niān
月庵 和尚問僧：「奚仲 [1] 造車[2] 一百輻，拈
què liǎng tóu qù què zhóu míng shén me biān shì
却兩頭，去却軸，明甚麼邊事。」

[1] 【奚仲】 [xī zhòng]: A legendary wheel maker of the mythical Xia dynasty (c. 2070 -1600 B.C.), mentioned in several books, such as the "Classic of Mountains and Seas" (山海經).

[2] 【車】 S:【车】 [chē]: "a wheel" / "a cart" / "a vehicle."

【日】

こ げつあんおしょう そう と けいちゅう くるま つく
擧す。月庵和尚、僧に問う、「奚仲は車を造る
いっぴゃくぷく りょうとう ねんきゃく じく こきゃく なに
こと一百輻。兩頭を拈却し、軸を去却す。甚麼
へん こと あき
邊の事か明らむ。」

【E】

Manifest? Soll sie angeht -im Hintergrund noch eine andere, viel, viel ältere Stimme, die da sagt: ,Solange nicht die Philosophen Könige werden oder die Könige zu Philosophen, wird es unter den Menschen kein Ende des Unheils geben!'? So der griechische Philosoph Platon (427 -347 v.u.Z .) an zentraler Stelle seines bekanntesten Buches, der Politeia - vgl. Platon (!) , S. 294."

Yue'an asked his fellow monks: "Xizhong[1] made two-wheeled carts with a hundred spokes [between their two wheels]. Now, if you were to take away both ends and strip out the axle, what then becomes apparent?"

[1] "Xizhong": See note 1 of the Chinese text.

If one observes a wooden cart driven on a road, the usefulness of this piece of machinery is readily apparent. It acts as a remarkably simple and yet incredibly effective countermeasure to the omnipresent, downward pull of the earth, allowing man to rapidly transport things across its coarse surface with considerably less effort than if he were to carry them on his back or pull them with his bare hands. The subtle perfection of the wheel, imitating the celestial wheels themselves, the heavenly mechanism, allows it to roll almost without friction on a flat road. We may marvel at the ingenuity of this invention, one of the most impactful for our species, and one that came relatively late in our history, admiring its incomparable usefulness and the fundamental role it plays in our world.

The cart only functions when each one of the numerous pieces forming this complex assembly is in its place and in a working condition. If the cart were to break down, irreparably damaged, this usefulness would then instantly vanish. This contraption would become a mere stumbling block on the path, a pile of rubbish, ready to be burned or thrown away. Likewise, if one were to first disassemble part of it —if one were to remove the hub holding the spokes and the axle together, most of the wheels would then fall apart, separated from one another. The mechanism would turn into a heap of wood, utterly useless. The disappearance of its use may nonetheless represent a unique occasion for a hidden facet of this thing to be revealed. Indeed, now that the function of this piece of machinery has been obscured, the substance of the cart then becomes clearly visible. The cart is no more, but the materials whereof it was made now appear more clearly to the observer. The wooden spokes are shown to be made of the dry cadavers of the pillars of the forest. Its iron nails are now seen as the crimson, powdery ore extracted from the dark body of the earth. No longer being a thing of the world, the elements that formed the cart now appear as the earth itself, showing us the oft-forgotten unicity of use and essence, of world and earth.

The world of man is nonetheless very much like the wooden cart, and the mind is what holds its pieces together. We gather the world and

the earth. We continuously support the ten thousand things forming the world, and hold the entire planet over our shoulders, with both world and earth being extremities of the same object, the same thing, like the axle joining the wheels. The world is a gigantic piece of machinery held on by our mind, and when the vacuity of our self is unveiled, the entire mechanism falls apart. When the mind is clear, and all things are released, the world crumbles, and all that is left is the whole of the earth itself, readily apparent. The essence of being is revealed when the use of the things of the world is concealed. What was obvious to the uncivilized, the naked ones living like animals upon the bare earth, in close contact with it, must now be rediscovered by the educated sons of the world, the heirs of civilization. We can then enjoy the blessings of the world while partaking in the truth of the earth, seeing that they are one and the same, two facets of the same essence of being. We can then gain awareness of the decisive role played by our self in this playful tension between earth and world, a tension that sets in motion our existence, carrying us on the way of the sky, as the heavenly wheels continue their endless revolutions.

Case 34 —The Girl with the Two Souls — 倩女離魂

Source: The Gateless Barrier Case 35.

【中】

wǔ zǔ wèn sēng yún qiàn nǚ lí hún nǎ gè shì zhēn di

五祖[1] 問僧云：「倩女離魂，[2] 那箇是真底。」[3]

[1] 【五祖法演】[wǔ zǔ fǎ yǎn]: (—1104 A.D.) Not to be mistaken for the fifth patriarch: 弘忍 [hóng rěn] (601 —675 A.D.）

[2] 【倩女離魂】 S:【倩女离魂】 [qiàn nǚ lí hún]: A short story found in the "Extensive Records of the Taiping Era" (太平廣記). A woman named Qianniang (倩娘), or Qiannü (倩女), fell in love with a man named Wang Zhou (王宙), but her father wanted her to marry someone else. Heartbroken, the couple decided to flee together to another province and lived there for 5 years. Wanting to see her family again, they still returned for a visit, but were shocked to see that Qianniang was still at her father's house, heartbroken and alone for five years. The two Qianniang then once again became one.

[3] 【底】 [di]: As used here, it is equivalent to the modern Chinese particle 的 .

【日】

こ ご そ そう と いわ せいじょりこん

擧す。五祖、僧に問うて云く、「倩女離魂、

なこ こ しんてい

那箇か是れ眞底。」

【E】

Wuzu asked his fellow monks: "Qiannü, the pretty girl, had her soul split in two. Which one of them was the true one?"

Our body is the gate through which we experience our environment, with our thoughts and our will allowing us to leave marks upon our world through the agency of our limbs and our mouth, offering us the possibility of expressing ourselves, of pouring out the content of our mind onto it. Our voice echoes widely throughout the air and slips into the ears of our neighbors, like a seal delicately imprinting their minds. Our hands shape the malleable mud, our tools carve the rigid rocks, and the warm touch of our skin triggers a cascade of emotions in those in close contact with us. If this gate were to be sealed shut, or if it crumbled under the unbearable weight of the years, what would remain of us? The growth of our self was fostered by the uninterrupted flow passing through this very gate. Our surroundings shaped our nature like a potter imparts a shape to a lump of clay. We are not merely thrown into our world, as things merely standing out from it. We are rather products of this world, and we are the world itself. Our self always remains inextricably linked to it. The mind is one with the body, and the body is one with the world. It may appear paradoxical, but this also implies that the destruction of our flesh does not signal the end of our self. Indeed, if the distinction between the self and the world is illusory, a mere hallucination, this means that one cannot vanish without the vanishing of the other. The death of the body of one man is not the death of the world of all men, and thus the self does not lose its essence with the ineluctable collapse of the body. It rather lives through the emergence of new generations, through the endurance of our branch of the tree of life.

The flux offered to us by our senses is, even so, manifold. Each one of our eyes offers us a unique vision of our world, and yet the two perspectives represent a single environment. Joined together, these two perspectives even give us more than the sum of the two images they offer: they bring us a new dimension, the depths of the world in front of us, not found in either one of these images. Distinguishing the two perspectives is a necessary preliminary step, but only when reunited do they present a vision of the truth of the world.

Likewise, we split ourselves and shatter our world into innumerable pieces because these alone can be grasped by our reason, but only by piecing them back together afterward can we get a glimpse of the truth of being, out of the reach of our intellect. The truth is only experienced

when one no longer sees the pieces nor the whole they form, when the self and the world are not merely one, but instead become none, nothing, nothing, with each blade of grass covering the blossoming meadows becoming so many fingers, the birds soaring in the air becoming our eyes, and the alternation of the days and nights paced by the revolutions of the earth becoming our heartbeat.[29]

Case 35 —Qinglin's Deadly Snake —青林死蛇

Source: The Book of Serenity Case 59.

【中】

jǔ sēng wèn qīng lín xué rén jìng wǎng shí rú hé lín
舉。僧問青林：「學人徑[1] 往時如何。」林
yún sǐ shé dāng dà lù quàn zǐ mò dāng tóu sēng yún dāng tóu shí
云：「死蛇當大路。勸[2] 子莫當頭。」僧云：「當頭時
rú hé lín yún sàng zǐ mìng gēn sēng yún bù dāng tóu
如何。」林 云：「喪[3] 子命根。」[4] 僧云：「不當頭
shí rú hé lín yún yì wú huí bì chù sēng yún zhèng rèn me
時如何。」林 云：「亦無迴避處。」僧云：「正恁麼
shí rú hé lín yún què shī yě sēng yún wèi shěn xiàng shén me
時如何。」林 云：「却失也。」僧云：「未審向甚麼
chù qù yě lín yún cǎo shēn wú mì chù sēng yún hé shàng
處去也。」林 云：「草深，無覓處。」僧云：「和尚
yě xū dī fáng shī dé lín fǔ zhǎng yún yì děng shì gè dú qì
也須隄防[5] 始得。」林 拊掌云：「一等是箇毒氣。」

[1] 【徑】 S:【径】 [jìng]: "a footpath."

[2] 【勸】 S:【劝】 [quàn]: "to advise."

[3] 【喪】 S:【丧】 [sàng]: "to lose" (something immaterial but important, such as one's life or courage).

[4] 【命根】 [mìng gēn]: "the foundation upon which one's life is based."

[5] 【隄防】 [dī fáng]: "to be watchful [of something]" / "to guard against [something]."

【日】

[29] See: Yamada, Kou'un, *Mumonkan (Gateless Gate)* [Unpublished manuscript]: "As long as you are attached to the dualistic concept of two Seis, you cannot grasp the true one. Which is the true one? What is the true Sei? As you know, when you have truly become one with Mu, you realize what Mu is. When you have really become one with Sei, you will see the true Sei easily."

舉す。僧、青林に問う、「學人徑に往く時如何。」林云く、「死蛇大路に當る、子に勸む當頭することなかれ。」僧云く、「當頭する時如何。」林云く、「子が命根を喪す。」僧云く、「當頭せざる時如何。」林云く、「亦廻避するに處なし。」僧云く、「正恁麼の時如何。」林云く、「却て失せり。」僧云く、「未審し甚麼の處に向って去るや。」林云く、「草深くして覓るに處なし。」僧云く、「和尚も也た須く隄防して始めて得べし。」林掌を拊して云く、「一等に是れ箇の毒氣と。」

【E】

A monk asked Qinglin: “How is it when a practitioner goes along the narrow path?” Qinglin said, “One will meet a deadly snake on the great road. The disciples are advised not to find themselves face-to-face with it.” The monk said, “What if one comes face to face with it?” Qinglin said, “The disciple will lose the foundation of his life.” The monk said, “What if one doesn’t come face to face with it?” Qinglin said, “There is no place to escape from it.” The monk said, “At that point, what then?” Qinglin said, “It vanishes.” The monk said, “I don’t know where it went.” Qinglin said, “The grass is deep, and there is no place where it can be seen.” The monk said, “The Master should also be watchful in order to get it.” Qinglin clapped his hands and said, “This one is also highly poisonous!”

Leisurely strolling the wide plains, far away from the concrete mazes erected by his brethren, the wanderer is free, his will unrestrained, his course unobstructed. Spotting a stranger or a wild beast, he has ample

time to retreat and avoid an unwanted encounter. The free life of the empty plains thus presents few challenges. It does not force him to strive and transcend his own limits, and he has no incentive to change his ways. The result is stagnation, a standstill of the self, with the experiences lived in the open land enriching his world each day that goes by, but failing to foster his own growth. Absolute freedom comes at the price of stasis. Without restraint, without boundaries, one is swimming in the air, unable to advance. It is through constraints, through hindrances, that one is able to find the support indispensable for progress to occur. It is when one cannot retreat, caught between walls in front of what is feared the most, that one is compelled to face what he dreads, to throw his life into a battle, seeing himself being transformed by this event, as his cowardice vanishes and a courageous warrior emerges within his mind, seizing his body.

When the plains end and the wanderer decides to venture into the valley, seeing the freedom of the open country progressively vanish, a path begins to appear. Still given the choice to go forward or to turn back, he is now being channeled between mountain walls made of rock and dust, ascending toward the peak on an increasingly narrow trail, a demonstration of his desire to see himself shaped by the earth, a sign of abandonment of the civilized life of the city. Far from other men, having relinquished his freedom to see the end of the road, he finally comes face to face with a deadly snake. The infinite wideness of the plain has now been progressively reduced to a handbreadth. The countless things visible in the open country have one by one been merged together, to leave only a single thing standing in front of the traveler. The deadly snake has swallowed the heavens whole. It has devoured the earth. It has feasted on the flesh of all creatures and drunk up the ocean to the last drop. It is now all that is left of the world, the last thing, the most intimate friend and the harshest enemy, what can take one's life but also save it.

What is left when all the rest has been taken away is the self. It is also the master, and the world itself, which are one, as there is only one thing left. The self is nonetheless the most dangerous thing. It is the thing that one is most reluctant to let go of, but also the one whose release is the most necessary. Facing the deadly snake, there is no place into which one could retreat, as there is no place beside it. It occupies the entirety of the universe. Furthermore, the wanderer has no weapons in his hands, as the crawling animal has swallowed them all. All that he can do is let himself be bitten, succumbing to its power, feeling the venom diffusing through his veins and carried to the smallest vessels of his body, his consciousness numbed by the poison, accepting that he will see his life extinguished like an ember thrown into a freezing lake. At that point, the lake not only quenches the ember. As it vanishes, the ardent coal

indeed takes the entire lake with it into the bottomless abyss. It opens a chasm where the last thing falls into oblivion, swallowing emptiness itself, leaving *no-thing* behind, not even death.

When death itself has been let go of, one may then finally awaken, no longer knowing if he is alive or dead. Encountering other men, other wanderers on the path, or in the vast open plains, he admonishes them as they roam through the tall grasses, to be watchful for the snake sneakily slithering between the dancing blades, unseen and unheard. If they encounter it, it will take their life, and may even rob them of death itself, leaving them with no-thing, but offering them everything.

Case 36 —Zhimen's Lotus —智門蓮花荷葉

Source: The Blue Cliff Record Case 21.

【中】

jǔ sēng wèn zhì mén lián huā wèi chū shuǐ shí rú hé zhì mén yún lián huā sēng yún chū shuǐ hòu rú hé mén yún hé yè

舉。僧問智門：「蓮花未出水時如何。」智門云：「蓮花。」僧云：「出水後如何。」門云：「荷葉。」

【日】

こ そう ちもん と れんげ ま みず い とき いか ちもんいわ れんげ そういわ みず いで のち いか もんいわ かよう

擧す。僧、智門に問う、「蓮花未だ水を出でざる時如何。」智門云く、「蓮花。」僧云く、「水を出て後如何。門云く、「荷葉。」

【E】

A monk asked Zhimen: "What is it when the lotus has not yet come out of the water?" Zhimen said, "Lotus flowers."[1] The monk asked: "What is it after it has come out of the water?" Zhimen replied: "Lotus leaves."

[1] "Lotus flowers": The word here translated as "Lotus flowers" (蓮花) is also the name that designates the Lotus plant as a whole.

A primordial soup of various ingredients gathered by the currents of the ocean, stirred up by the moon itself as it raises the tides twice a day, with the sun imparting its warmth to it, and lightning bolts rearranging this mysterious mixture, this is how it seems that the first spark of life was kindled, triggering an uncontrollable cascade turning the stony surface of our planet into a splendid tree that almost magically drives a wedge between earth and sky, doing so without being separated from them, with life never really ceasing to be fully part of the lower realm, never reneging on its earthly nature. With each living being and each generation widely sowing the seeds that are the source of their descendants, ensuring the perpetuation of life, the young sprouts from the old, without an objective gap between each link of this fantastically lengthy chain going through the ages, covering the dry land and filling the seas. Profusely watered by the clouds and abundantly illuminated by the sun, the seeds buried in the muddy soil have hearkened the call of spring, and thus they, with great effort, pierce through the crust of the earth to rise toward the skies, while the fiery globe feeds the nascent plants with warmth and radiance. As the buds turn into colorful and fragrant flowers, they are considered by the world to have accomplished their destiny, to have reached the stage for which they were brought forth by life. With the flower's entrails exposed to the eyes of the living, its innermost, fragrant essence offered to the touch of the winds, it nonetheless has not fundamentally changed in nature since it was but a seed patiently waiting in the hard, frozen ground during winter. It is as it always was, and will always be, even when the eyes of man will turn away from its withered petals and desiccated stem. The withered blossom then does not "return" to the earth: it has always remained the earth itself, simply momentarily displaying another facet of its nature! The grains of pollen it offered to the winds to scatter and to the rains to sow represent the extension of its being, passing on the torch of its existence through time and space, another great revolution of the celestial wheels.

Man is likewise a mere lump of earth bewitched by life, never ceasing to be, never seeing his true nature irretrievably annihilated by the work of the skies, the weight of the years eroding his flesh and bones. The infant born in darkness will one day be bathed in the brightest light. His nature will not have been radically transformed, but rather only revealed and displayed for all eyes to behold, including our own. To see a difference between the seed and the flower, the ignorant and the enlightened, is to live in the realm of appearances, to live in the instantaneous, rather than to see the truth of nature, beyond the surface separating the earth and life, beyond the boundary isolating the present from the past and the future, to instead see the entire course of the being of all beings in the most insignificant flower in the midst of the meadow, having completely

forgotten the distinction between seed and flower, between oneself and a blade of grass, between the living and the dead, between the sooty earth and the azure sky. Enlightenment thus comes when one becomes blind, and when the one looking at the light sees the world around him but loses sight of himself.

Case 37 —Zhaozhou's Bridge —趙州石橋

Source: The Blue Cliff Record Case 52.

【中】

jǔ sēng wèn zhào zhōu jiǔ xiǎng zhào zhōu shí qiáo dào lái zhǐ jiàn
舉。僧問趙州：「久響[1] 趙州石橋，到來只見
lüè zhuó zhōu yún rǔ zhǐ jiàn lüè zhuó qiě bú jiàn shí qiáo sēng
略彴。」[2] 州云：「汝只見略彴，且不見石橋。」僧
yún rú hé shì shí qiáo zhōu yún dù lǘ dù mǎ zhuó
云：「如何是石橋。」州云：「渡驢渡馬彴。」

[1] 【響】 S:【响】 [xiǎng]: "to echo" (here, concerning someone's fame).

[2] 【略彴】 [lüè zhuó]: "a small and rudimentary wooden bridge."

【日】

こ そう じょうしゅう と ひさ じょうしゅう しゃっきょう
舉す。僧、趙州に問う、「久しく趙州の石橋を
した とうらい た りゃくしゃく み しゅう
響うに、到來すれば只だ略彴を見るのみ。」州
いわ なんじ た りゃくしゃく み さて しゃっきょう
云く、「汝は只だ略彴のみを見て、且も石橋は
み そういわ いか こ しゃっきょう しゅう
見ず。」僧云く、「如何なるか是れ石橋。」州
いわ ろば わた うま わた
云く、「驢を渡し馬を渡す。」

【E】

A monk asked Zhaozhou: "For a long time, the stone bridge of Zhaozhou[1] has echoed in my ears, but now that I have come here, what I see is a mere log bridge." Zhaozhou said, "You just see a log bridge, but you don't see the stone bridge." The monk said, "What is the stone bridge?" Zhaozhou said, "It is a bridge that lets both horses and donkeys cross."

[1] "Zhaozhou": The name of the master comes from the name of the city of Zhaozhou, in the vicinity of which he taught. It is located in what is now Hebei province (河北省).

When the poor of the world, those who have let go of all their meager possessions and deserted the crowded streets to take refuge in the great wasteland, where no-thing can be found, stumble upon each other, their meeting is often rich in playfulness and humor. Their words subvert the arbitrary order imposed by men, reversing the hierarchies, and they greet each other with what appears as insults but still brings smiles to their faces, as a testimony of their detachment from the trifles of the world, and from their own selves. Fame, an expression of the hierarchies of the world, may be carried by the voices echoing through the air, resonating in the ears of the people, but to exalt someone is to tighten the chain binding him to the man-made foundations of their world, to put a thicker blindfold upon his eyes, preventing him from seeing his own face. Having nothing to lose, not even possessing "no-thing-ness" itself, the desert dweller stretches his body on the bare soil, beholding the emptiness of the heavens above. He humbles himself, his skin touching the earth, and welcomes with mirth the humbling words of a stranger. The derision of the visitor is like drinking the sweetest elixir, and his invectives like eating the most succulent treats. These utterances are a helping hand to him. They keep his self contained, preventing it from swelling with pride, and thankful for these invaluable gifts, he swiftly returns the favor. He has been called a mere pile of rotten wood by the visitor, whereas the echoes of his fame had proclaimed him a monument made of the hardest granite, and thus he replies by likening his interlocutor to a donkey, stubborn and dull, only worthy to carry the burdens of the world. Some among the wisest of men nonetheless chose to ride donkeys instead of stallions or elephants, humbling themselves while they were exalted by their followers, a sign of acquaintance with the nature of their own selves.

Recognizing the unbreakable bond uniting them, the two men roaming the desert conclude their play by plunging themselves back into silence, only hearing the faint murmur of the sand swept away by the evening breeze. With the light of the world dimmed into obscurity, the donkey can no longer be distinguished from the stallion. The shabby, wooden footbridge now appears identical to the walkway made of robust slabs of pristine marble. Even the sharply drawn skyline of the city has faded away, and it is now impossible to discern it from the vast and empty expanse of the great wasteland. A new dawn will nonetheless soon gloriously appear, once again shedding light on all things, and then the humble ones sleeping on the bare earth will head back to the city, to lead its inhabitants out of bondage, stripping them of their burden, and showing them the wealth of the poor, the riches of those who have

nothing, accompanying them across the gigantic chasm, their bodies used as bridges so that they may discover what has always been concealed, right before their eyes.

Case 38 —One Arrow Through Three Gates —一鏃破三關

Source: The Blue Cliff Record Case 56.

【中】

jǔ liáng chán kè wèn qīn shān yì zú pò sān guān shí rú hé
舉。良禪客問欽山：「一鏃[1] 破三關時如何。」
shān yún fàng chū guān zhōng zhǔ kàn liáng yún rèn me zé zhī
山云：「放出『關中主』看。」良云：「恁麼則知
guò bì gǎi shān yún gèng dài hé shí liáng yún hǎo jiàn fàng
過必改。」山云：「更待何時。」良云：「好箭放
bù zháo suǒ zài biàn chū shān yún qiě lái shé lí liáng
不著所在。」，便出。山云：「且來闍黎。」[2] 良
huí shǒu shān bǎ zhù yún yì zú pò sān guān jí qiě zhī shì
回首，山把住云：「『一鏃破三關』即且止，試
yǔ qīn shān fā jiàn kàn liáng nǐ yì shān dǎ qī bàng yún qiě
與欽山發箭看。」良擬議，山打七棒云：「且
tīng zhè hàn yí sān shí nián
聽[3] 這漢疑三十年。」

[1] 【鏃】 S:【镞】 [zú]: “an arrowhead.”

[2] 【闍黎】 S:【阇黎】 [shé lí]: “a Buddhist teacher.” The transliteration of the Sanskrit word आचार्य [ācārya]. It may also be written 闍梨 .

[3] 【聽】 S:【听】 [tīng]: “to allow.”

【日】

こ りょうぜんかく きんざん と いちぞく さんかん
擧す。良禪客、欽山に問う、「一鏃もて三關を
やぶ とき いかん さん いわ かんちゅう しゅ ほうしゅつ
破る時、如何。」山云く、「關中の主を放出し
み りょういわ さよう すなわ あやまち し かなら
看よ。」良云く、「恁麼ならば則ち過を知りて必ず
あらた さんいわ さら いつ ま りょう
改めん。」山云く、「更に何時をか待たん。」良
いわ こうせんはな しょざい つ すなわ いで
云く、「好箭放つに所在に著かずと。便ち出ず。」
さんいわ まず き そなた りょう くび めぐ
山云く、「且は來たれ、闍黎。」良、首を回らす。

山、把住えて云く、「一鏃もて三關を破ることは
即ち且て止く、試みに欽山の與に箭を發し看よ。」
良、疑議す。山、打つこと七棒して云く、「且は
聽す、這の漢疑うこと三十年なるを。」

【E】

A Zen practitioner named Liang asked Qinshan: "What is it when one single arrow breaks through three barriers?" Qinshan said, "Drive out the master standing in the barriers, so that I may see him." Liang said, "If so, I will acknowledge that I have strayed and will change." Qinshan said, "How long do you plan to wait?" Liang said, "A good arrow that cannot find where to be aimed at," and he then went out. Qinshan said, "Come back, teacher!" Liang turned his head, and then Qinshan grasped him and said, "Let's put aside the story of the arrow that breaks through three barriers. Just shoot an arrow for Qinshan, so that he may see it." Liang was still trying to understand what he meant, but Qinshan hit him seven times with a stick and said, "I will allow this fellow to keep puzzling for thirty years."

The overcoming of the obstacles seen upon the path is often the focus of the existence of the one striving for liberation from the delusions of the world. He tenaciously tries to shatter the barriers obstructing his progress with the sword of his reason. He boldly shoots arrows at them, without realizing that something else stands in the way, engulfing the arrows, absorbing the blows of the sword, before they reach their destination, bringing to naught all of his efforts. Our fiercest enemy, the greatest obstacle firmly standing in front of our destination, is our own self. When we clearly see our own nature, we may then see that the barriers are but a mirage, an illusion emerging from within ourselves. These barriers may be named greed, hatred, or delusion,[30] or they may bear other names, but they all are made of the same material, and they equally vanish when light is shed upon them. When the one standing

[30] That is, the "three poisons" affecting men according to Buddhism.

in the barriers has been shot, he takes down these barriers with him as his corpse falls down to the ground. Without the self, there is indeed no desire, no envy, and the truth can then shine, its light no longer encountering any interference, rushing through the firmament without the slightest impediment.

To see the barriers means that we are still caught in the mire of the world, still attached to our self. No matter what we throw at them, their presence is a testimony to our failure, a proof of our state of delusion. To proclaim that one has struck a serious blow at them is a sign that one has yet to know what the barriers are. The only arrow that is well shot is the one that disappears into thin air, lost in the emptiness of the sky, nowhere to be seen. This arrow breaks the sound barrier, and the deafening roar that then resonates throughout the earth and the sky is the one causing the complete collapse of all the walls, all the ramparts, all the gates, with them violently crashing down to the earth, before they are engulfed by it, leaving no trace behind. Such an arrow is nonetheless hard to spot as it flies through the air, and it is easy to be mistaken about its course and its target. One may be quick to proclaim that it missed, but caution should always be observed, because as soon as one thinks he has seen where the arrow has landed, he misses the target, and he himself is found to be imprisoned in an unbreakable coffin.

When the projectile has pierced the heart of the one standing in the way, the world as a whole is vaporized and scattered by the winds. The distinctions between hitting and missing, between one and three, between the man and the barrier, are simply no more. After this occurs, when one is called out by a brother, there is no longer anyone there to hearken to this call, and thus the body stands still, undisturbed by the innumerable sounds passing through the air and entering his ears. To hear something, or to turn one's head when called, is to still be attached to one's self.[31] When there are no obstacles on the way, even the most violent blows of a bludgeon will not cause him to deviate from his course, and he will not even feel them. Even the passing of the years, the grand circumambulations of our planet around our radiant star, go unnoticed, as the mind is then like an ocean of the purest water, perfectly transparent. There is no longer any reflection, any wondering. One indeed cannot be puzzled by absolute clarity.

Case 39 —Yunmen's Treasure —云門一寶

Source: The Blue Cliff Record Case 62.

[31] See:「要真正參逡『一鏃破三關』，胸中必須得沒有任何是非、得失，此外還得超出言句之外。巨良禪師的一回頭，表明他胸中還有是非、得失之心。」 From: 吳平。《新譯碧巖集》。台北：三民書局股份有限公司，2005.

This case is identical to the Book of Serenity, case 92.

【中】

jǔ yún mén shì zhòng yún qián kūn zhī nèi yǔ zhòu zhī jiān
舉。雲門示眾云：「乾坤[1]之內，宇宙之間，
zhōng yǒu yì bǎo mì zài xíng shān niān dēng lóng xiàng fó diàn lǐ jiāng
中有一寶，祕在形山[3]。」[2]「拈燈籠向佛殿裏，將
sān mén lái dēng lóng shàng
三門來燈籠上。」

[1] 【乾坤】 [qián kūn]: “the sky and the earth” / “the universe.” A term originating from the “Book of Changes” (易經).

[2] A sentence quoted from the “Treasure Theory” (寶藏論), the work of a Buddhist philosopher of the Later Qin dynasty named Sēng Zhào (僧肇, 384-414).

[3] 【形山】 [xíng shān]: Literally “the shape of a mountain,” but in a Buddhist context it also designates the human body. (See: 「即指肉身」 . From: 丁福保. 《佛學大辭典》。佛陀教育基金會 , 2004.)

【日】

こ うんもん しゅ しめ いわ けんこん うち うちゅう
舉す。雲門、衆に示して云く、「乾坤の内、宇宙の
あいだ なか いっぽう あ ぎょうざん ひざい とうろう とりあ
間、中に一寶有り、形山に秘在す、と。燈籠を拈げ
ぶつでんうち むか さんもん もっ とうろうじょう き
て佛殿裏に 向い、 三門を 將て燈籠上に來たらしむ。」

【E】

Yunmen, instructing the assembly, said, “‘Within heaven and earth, in the midst of the universe, there is one treasure hidden in a body, which is shaped like a mountain.’[1] You take up a lantern and go to the Buddha Hall; you take the triple temple gate[2] and put them on the lantern.”

[1] A quote, see note 2 of the Chinese text.

[2] “The triple temple gate”: The gate is actually a set of three gates, also symbolizing three gates toward liberation.

Each one of us is the main character in the play of his existence, the actor and the window through which the stage is seen. Within the

heavens and upon the earth, in the midst of the universe, we are the center point of all that is, the great mountain whose summit reaches to the highest sky, and whose base encompasses the entire earth. In the heart of this mountain, the most magnificent jewel is buried, away from the greedy eyes of men and the blinding light of the world. The imposing mountain jealously guards it, cherishing it above all things, refusing to let it be carried away by those selfishly and mercilessly plundering its body. This treasure is our most prized possession, the wealth that we should defend with our life, ready to spill the blood of friends and foes alike to prevent its disappearance, but few even know of its existence, and even fewer are ready to leave the brightness of the heavens to discover what lies in this dark sanctuary in the innermost part of this great body.

On the peak of the great mountain, a beacon has nevertheless been lit since the dawn of time, and it outshines the brilliance of the sun and the scintillation of the more distant stars. This bonfire, our ego, reveals the world through its radiance, the ten thousand things that occupy our minds and fill up the earth. When the light of the day recedes and abandons its dominion to the darkness of the night, and when we finally decide to leave the world behind to penetrate the sanctuary with incomparable awe and wonder in our hearts, as this place is engulfed in shadows, we notice that our mere presence casts away the darkness and promptly chases away the quietude of this mysterious temple. The serenity of the dark is suddenly disturbed by the intrusion of our light, bringing with it the constellation of things we possess into this place where no-thingness previously reigned supreme. Struck with the realization of our profanation, of our imprudent violation of this shrine celebrating the dark itself, non-discrimination opposed to the clarity reigning in the world, we suddenly take the doors of the sanctuary to quench the fire we ignorantly introduced in it. As the flames are suffocated by the wooden panels, the shadows suddenly return and reconquer the hall, whose purpose becomes clear: it celebrates and incarnates emptiness itself, what does not belong to the world of things but rather transcends it. The shadows now enshroud every single thing, and soon enough, the dark once again exerts an absolute dominion over this shelter of the mind. There is no longer any light, nor any body. The mountain has been leveled, and the beacon has been doused by the rain. There is no earth or heaven anymore, no center nor boundaries. There is no treasure to cling to, and no one is there who could cherish any wealth. The play has ended, with the closing of the black velvet drape, but the audience has already left, and is now nowhere to be found, while the actors have all vanished, and the stage has crumbled into dust. Nothingness is the jewel that then alone endures.

Case 40 —When I Do Not See —吾不見時

Source: The Blue Cliff Record Case 94.

This case is identical to the Book of Serenity, case 88.

【中】

jǔ léng yán jīng yún wú bú jiàn shí hé bú jiàn wú bú jiàn
舉。《楞嚴經》云：「吾不見時，何不見吾不見
zhī chù ruò jiàn bú jiàn zì rán fēi bǐ bú jiàn zhī xiàng ruò bú jiàn wú bú
之處。若見不見，自然非彼不見之相；若不見吾不
jiàn zhī dì zì rán fēi wù yún hé fēi rǔ
見之地，自然非物，云何非汝。」

【日】

こ りょうごんきょう いわ わ み とき
舉す。『楞嚴經』に云く、「吾れ見ざる時、
なん わ みず ところ み も みず み
何ぞ吾が不見の處を見ざる。若し不見を見れば、
しぜん かれ みず そう ひ も わ みず ち
自然に彼の不見の相に非ず。若し吾が不見の地を
み しぜん もの ひ いかん なんじ ひ
見ざれば、自然に物に非ず。云何ぞ汝に非ざると。」

【E】

The Shurangama Sutra says: “When I don’t see, why does the place that I do not see remain unseen? If one sees that it is unseen, then naturally it is not the aspect that he does not see. If one does not see the ground that I do not see, then naturally it is not a thing. Why is it not your self?”

If no one depicts with words what sight is and pours these descriptive words into the ears of a person who has been blind since birth, he will never realize the nature of his own condition. But more pernicious than blindness is an illusion, as it indeed presents an image of falsehood deceitfully disguised as truth, and the observer is all too often easily duped, firmly convinced that he sees what *is*, whereas it remains concealed, along with the very fact that something remains unseen.

When we attentively contemplate the wonders of nature illuminated by the great luminary steadily setting the rhythm of the days and the nights, we see the things upon which its light is reflected and diffused before it buries itself in the depths of our eyes, but unless we take a glance at its source, we do not see the light itself. Likewise, our experience of the earth and the sky is mediated by our world, which shatters the unicity of all that *is* into a profusion of things. The role played by this inconspicuous mediation is nonetheless seldom known. We see nature through the lens of our world, cutting it out into pieces and assigning them names and properties, but the translucent nature of this lens renders it invisible to most. Only when the world's very foundations are shaken, only when the lens is cracked, does it suddenly make its entry into man's world itself. To see what we do not see, this is the first step toward an unmediated experience of the earth and the skies, a discovery of the truth of nature.

Consciousness of the blind spots of our minds yet does not imply that we are necessarily able to be cured of our impairment. To know that the earth is concealed by the world is not an experience of the truth of the earth. Such an experience only comes when one lets go of the lens through which he perceives his world, sacrificing his intelligence, abandoning his grasping of the ten thousand things occupying the land around him and having a place inside his mind, so that the incomprehensible may be approached, without being seized with the hands or the tools of reason, but rather simply feeling the roughness of the whole, being carried by the current on the way of the sky, without desire or will, having forgotten the difference between sight and blindness, light and shadows.

What is perceived when one perceives the limits of his perception is the edge between world and earth, the frontier between truth and falsehood, which is itself only a delusion, a product of our mind and our world. The truth of the earth always was, is, and will be right before our eyes. We merely fail to notice the distortion caused by the windows through which we observe it, the mosaic of translucent tiles, the great stained-glass picture of our world, giving us a biased image of it. When each tile is fused with its neighbors, and the panes are rendered as clear as the purest crystal, the truth of the earth can then shine in our eyes, with us finally seeing what we failed to see before. We no longer see the tiles. We forget every single "thing," up to the last one. The immense totality that we face then reverberates every ray of light into our eyes, and the last thing reveals itself to be none other than ourselves, like the extended, luminous arms of our galaxy or the leaves delicately dancing with the winds, as we are now blind to every thing, seeing only everything.

Case 41 —Zhaozhou's Three Turning Words —趙州三轉語

Source: The Blue Cliff Record Case 96.

【中】

jǔ zhào zhōu shì zhòng sān zhuǎn yǔ jīn fó bú dù lú mù
舉。趙州示眾三轉語。[1] （「金佛不度爐，木
fó bú dù huǒ ní fó bú dù shuǐ zhēn fó nèi lǐ zuò
佛不度火，泥佛不度水，真佛內裏坐。」）

[1] 【轉語】 S:【转语】 [zhuǎn yǔ]: "a turning-word," that is, a short sentence or a word that is meant to trigger a deep enlightenment. The text of the three turning words, here in parentheses, is not present in the original text.

【日】

こ じょてんゅう しゅ さんてん ご しめ
舉す。趙州、衆に三轉語を示す。

【E】

Zhaozhou mentioned three turning words to the assembly.[1] *("The Buddha made of clay will not pass through water." "The Buddha made of metal will not pass through a furnace." "The Buddha made of wood will not pass through fire." Followed by: "the true Buddha sits within.")*

[1] "Turning words": See note 1 of the Chinese text

The day ineluctably folds into the night. The earth unceasingly turns around the glorious star illuminating our lives, and men stumble upon things, or things emerge as thoughts, sights, or words, which immediately and irremediably change the course of their existence. A turning word casually spat into the air by a passer-by or carefully whispered into one's ears by a mentor is enough to dispel the illusions that seized his mind, to shatter the rampart veiling a truth. The turning word itself turns, and it causes the mind to turn, without interruption. When the spinning stops, it then swiftly vanishes. When one has understood it, the high walls once again rise from the ground, and he is once again blind, as if the heavenly wheels themselves were abruptly

stopped in their course. One must keep turning and turning until the mind is numbed, until vision is blurred, and there is no direction, no walls, and no mind. After that, one will become a lifelong pilgrim on the way.

The pilgrim on the way is then like a golden statue, reflecting the light poured upon him, offering it back graciously, naturally, without any thought. When the torrent of lava runs through his path, the statue has no eyes to watch for danger, and no skin to feel the incandescence of the brazier. It rolls straight into the blazing flow, without regard for the integrity of its form, as what is dead cannot die. The earth itself cannot be reclaimed by the earth. Melted by the unbearable heat, the statue loses its shape, succumbing to the great pull of the earth that flattens it, causing it to lie down on the planet's surface, spread widely, as if embracing the body of a beloved. Afterwards, the gold itself can no longer be spotted by the onlooker, and all that can be seen is a luminescent sea of crimson fire. The statue is no more, but its essence is left undisturbed. The gold remains as it was, having only shed its appearance to become one with the rest of the earth, seeing its ego be replaced by the whole, completely dissolved.

The pilgrim on the way is also like a wooden statue, carved out from the sturdy trunk of a pillar of the forest, grown patiently during decades of successions of winters and summers, profusely showered with light and bathed in the rains before being given an unnatural shape with a chisel, ceasing to be mere wood and becoming an object of the world. Discarded by this world, ceasing to be a part of it, this statue rolls down the path as a wildfire ravages the woods down below. It is worthless outside of this world, and its hands do not move to stop its fall and change its fate. What is dead cannot die, and it thus impassively advances into the flames, sharing the destiny of these majestic trees assaulted by the fire, stripped bare of their leaves, their bark charred, until they themselves become flame and ember, their substance turned into ashes, lifted up by the winds to join the loftiest clouds, without a single thought, without a shred of tremor, or a hint of regret. The statue likewise burns and burns as it stands among the trees, becoming flame, turned into dark coal, and then into white ashes before the last traces of its existence disappear. Its essence is, however, left untouched by this event. The wood it is made of, a reunion of the earthly and heavenly, the work of the sun and the labor of the soil, has only been returned to its sources, the ashes seeping into the ground and floating in the air. Dispossessed of its ego, no longer recognizable as a statue, it still remains, one with the realms above and below, without thinking about either, knowing no-thing.

The pilgrim on the way is also like a statue made of mud, rolling down the steep flank of a mountain, toward the river descending through the valley. Carrying everything caught in its translucent flow down to

the great ocean, the stream welcomes the plunging of the statue into its flexible, watery body. It swiftly begins to knead the mud it is made of with its minute, invisible hands, softening it as the water infiltrates it. The mud soon becomes one with the water, becoming minuscule bits floating in the liquid as the statue is patiently dissolved, turned into the river itself, one with the whole of the waters enfolding the earth: the clouds hovering over the land, the rain dripping from the mountain top, and the river patiently carving the valley across the ages, running to the monumental ocean coating the face of our planet, forming a perfect cycle in harmony with the turning of the celestial wheels, the passing of the days and the seasons.

What is carried on the way is immutable, forever remaining the whole, and not a mere part of it. The essence is not the form, and the self is not what being is. Where no thought arises, there is no fear, no envy, no self, and no inside or outside.[32] Turning away from the world, one may discover the truth hidden by its lights. There, there is no gold, no wood, or mud. There is no form or material. There is no direction, no path to follow, and nobody to tread it. When the great death has been encountered, when one's form has been destroyed and one's essence scattered to the winds or dissolved in the great sea, then can the truth finally shine, where there are no eyes to see and no skin to feel, beyond all frontiers, only a sublime and indistinct whirlwind encompassing all that is.

Case 42 —Zhaozhou's Dog —趙州狗子

Source: The Book of Serenity Case 18.

The text here is more complete than the text of the Gateless Barrier, case 1, but the meaning of the two cases is different.

【中】

sēng wèn zhào zhōu gǒu zi huán yǒu fó xìng yě wú zhōu yún yǒu
僧問趙州：「狗子還有佛性也無。」州云：「有。」
sēng yún jì yǒu wèi shén me què zhuàng rù zhè gè pí dài wéi tā
僧云：「既有，為甚麼却撞入[1]這箇皮袋。」「為他
zhī ér gù fàn yòu yǒu sēng wèn gǒu zi huán yǒu fó xìng yě wú zhōu
知而故犯。」又有僧問：「狗子還有佛性也無。」州
yuē wú sēng yún yí qiè zhòngshēng jiē yǒu fó xìng gǒu zi
曰：「無。」僧云：「『一切眾生皆有佛性』，[2]狗子

[32] It can be linked to the sentence "When no thoughts arise, then all things are without blame." 「一心不生，萬法無咎」 (See: 有馬賴底. 《充実茶掛の禅語辞典》。東京：淡交社, 2016: 「一心生ぜざれば万法咎無し。鑑智僧璨（かんちそうさん）、禅宗の三祖鑑智僧璨の著とされる『信心銘』は、自由であることを説いたものである。」)

wèi shén me què wú zhōu yún wéi yī yǒu yè shí zài
為什麼却無。」州云：「為伊有業識[3] 在。」

[1] 【撞入】 [zhuàng rù]: Designates a “sudden intrusion,” but it can here be interpreted as “to creep into.”

[2] A quote from the “Nirvana Sutra” (大般涅槃經), chapter 7. The full sentence is as follows: 「一切眾生皆有佛性，以是性故，斷無量億諸煩惱結即得成於阿耨多羅三藐三菩提，除一闡提。」

[3] 【業識】 [yè shí]: “karmic consciousness.”

【日】

こ そう じょうしゅう と く し ぶっしょうあ
擧す。僧、趙州に問う、「狗子に佛性有りや
ま な しゅういわ う そういわ すで う
也た無しや。」州云く、「有。」僧云く、「既に有、
なん し かえ しゃこ ひ だい どうにゅう
甚麼と爲てか却って這箇の皮袋に撞入するや。」
しゅういわ た し ことさ おか ため またそう
州云く、「他の知って故らに犯すが爲なり。」又僧
あ と く し ぶっしょうあ ま な しゅう
有り問う、「狗子に佛性有りや也た無しや。」州
いわ む そういわ いっさいしゅじょうみなぶっしょうあ く
云く、「無。」僧云く、「一切衆生皆佛性有りと、狗
し なん かえ な しゅういわ かれ ごっ
子什麼としてか却って無なる。」州云く、「伊に業
しき あ あ ため
識の有り在るが爲なり。」

【E】

A monk asked Zhaozhou: “A dog has Buddha-nature, no?” Zhaozhou said, “It has.” The monk said, “If it has it, why did it creep into that skin bag?” Zhaozhou said, “Because it knows, and still chose to do so.” Another monk asked: “A dog has Buddha-nature, no?” Zhaozhou said, “No”. The monk said, “‘All living beings have Buddha-nature.’[1] Why doesn’t the dog have it?” Zhaozhou said, “Because it is in its karmic consciousness.”

[1] A quote, see note 2 of the Chinese text.

Man is keen on erecting gigantic structures upon quicksand, focusing his attention on the progress of his work rather than on the soundness of its foundation and its purpose. Built with words, his world rests upon a mire, ready to collapse at the weakest blow. His places of worship are often the shakiest ones, with "gods" and "saints" carved out from the earth, whose nature eludes him, and who are defined with other words crafted by him, with the structure resting upon itself, suspended in the air in a circular fashion, defying reason. To every question regarding the nature of these things of the world, a resounding yes may be followed by an equally truthful no. What is envisioned, the objective of this endeavor is something that goes beyond words, that transcends all the "yes" and "no," being and the absence of being. To show the way is to kick the cornerstone of this wobbly palace, to annihilate the realm of words, so that what is not made of words may be revealed and touched.

Quibbling with philosophers of the clouds, one may have the chance of seeing the vulnerability of their common ground, or he may lose the way and become another faithful and deluded servant of this giant tower that aims for the highest heaven. Nothing is set in stone, and nothing is written with indelible ink. When asked if this or that possesses a certain quality, the fool of the world, wise of the way, will answer with a simple "it has," or "it is." Wielding worlds, any answer can be justified with other words, if one is offered the opportunity to develop the train of his thought. This "it" may nonetheless also encompass more than the narrow object envisioned by the questioner. It *is*. "It" does not need a definition. "It" does not need to be known, and "it" is unbounded, encompassing the whole of being. This statement then echoes like an invocation, a vocal celebration of being itself, seen in the most insignificant thing, the subject of an interrogation by an inexperienced mouth.[33] This calling may perhaps fall on deaf ears, and the naïve inquirer will then ask once more.

Trying to use more words to shed light on what cannot be seen but only perceived with an open heart, the novice receives the reply to his argument: "It has not," "It is not," "No!" Absolute possession, complete presence, and pure being are contrasted with utter dispossession, total absence, and sheer non-being. This answer is like a hurricane sweeping the entire earth, depriving it of all the things present on its face. It cleans up the slate of the world, erasing every single character, plunging the air into utter silence. The young man was playing chess with his master, advancing the neatly aligned pieces on the chequered board, when suddenly, his adversary wipes them all out with a sweep of his arms, grabbing his collar and shaking him violently, desperately attempting to

[33]See: Yamada, Kou'un, *Shôyôroku (Book of Equanimity)* [Unpublished manuscript]: "In other words, the phenomenal world is clearly revealed. That is the world of 'U' or 'having.' In this case, it means the entire universe, including Mu, perhaps. There is nothing except U (having). This is absolute U or having."

show him that he has no time to waste in futile games, and that the answers he seeks are all written in the heavens above and upon the earth around him, but he is blind, his sight ruined by the proximity of the board and his excessive familiarity with these figurines.

Offered a helpful hand, and then pushed away; given a word that sheds light, and then one that casts him in darkness, the inquirer thus receives a precious insight, a valuable lesson. Puzzled by contradictions, with the seed of doubt sown deeply into his heart, it is the absurdity of the realm of words that is, in fact, pointed out, touched with a finger that threatens it, and it is now ready to crumble to the true ground. Absolute presence is the same as complete absence. Total brightness renders one as blind as utter darkness. It is through the interplay of both that the truth may shine into his eyes. If you expect a "yes," he will tell you "no," and "yes" if you expect a "no," keeping you wondering, preventing you from understanding, which is the death of wisdom.[34] When all hope of an answer has been abandoned, then will it present itself in front of your eyes, as clear as the day, as transparent as the night sky. Then you will see the earth through the eyes of a dog and feel the sea as a fish does. Then will all the branches of the tree of life be your own arms, and you will perceive its root, the deepest ground upon which your world was built, under its ruins, discovering there the highest heavens.

Case 43 —Huguo's Three Disgraces —護國三憿

Source: The Book of Serenity Case 28.

【中】

jǔ sēng wèn hù guó hè lì kū sōng shí rú hé guó
舉。僧問 護國：「鶴[1] 立枯松時如何。」 國
yún dì xià dì yì chǎng mǒ luǒ sēng yún dī shuǐ dī dòng shí rú
云：「地下底一場憿儸。」[2] 僧云：「滴水滴凍[3] 時如
hé guó yún rì chū hòu yì chǎng mǒ luǒ sēng yún huì chāng shā
何。」 國 云：「日出後一場憿儸。」僧云：「會昌沙
tài shí hù fǎ shàn shén xiàng shén me chù qù yě guó yún sān
汰[4] 時，護法善神[5] 向甚麼處去也。」 國 云：「三
mén tóu liǎng gè yì chǎng mǒ luǒ
門頭兩箇一場憿儸。」

[1] 【鶴】 S:【鹤】 [hè]: "a crane."

[2] 【憿儸】 [mǒ luó]: A phonetic transcription of a Sanskrit word meaning "to be

[34] See: 神保如天. 《從容録通解》。東京：無我山房, 1915. Page 147 (Case 18).

ashamed" (the original Sanskrit word could not be identified by the author of the present book).

[3] 【滴水滴凍】 [dī shuǐ dī dòng]: "one drop of water, one drop of ice." In this "Zen word," one may see the contrast between the immutability of the essence of water and the changeable states through which it passes. Are we not very similar?

[4] 【會昌沙汰】 S:【会昌沙汰】 [huì chāng shā tài]: Designates a persecution of Buddhism decreed in 845 A.D. by Emperor Wuzong of Tang, during his Huichang era (會昌, 841–846 A.D.); 【沙汰】 [shā tài]: "sorting out" / "elimination." In Japanese, this word now means "affair" / "incident."

[5] 【護法善神】 S:【护法善神】 [hù fǎ shàn shén]: " the Benevolent Guardian Deities of the Dharma."

【日】

舉す。僧、護國に問う、「鶴枯松に立つ時如何。」國云く、「地下底一場の憿懶。」僧云く、「滴水滴凍の時如何。」國云く、「日出でて一場の憿懶。」僧云く、「會昌沙汰の時、護法善神甚麼の處に向って去るや。」國云く、「三門頭の兩箇、一場の憿懶。」

【E】

A monk asked Huguo: "How about when a crane perches on a withered pine tree?" Huguo said, "It's a disgrace for those on the ground." The monk asked: "What about when drops of water are frozen one by one?" Huguo said, "It's a disgrace once the sun has risen." The monk asked: "At the time of the Huichang Persecution,[1] where did the Benevolent Guardian Deities[2] of the Dharma go?" Huguo said, "It is a disgrace for the two of them on both sides of the temple gate."

[1] "Huichang persecution": See note 4 of the Chinese text.

[2] "Guardian Deities": See note 5 of the Chinese text.

How fortunate the man with none! To remain that way, he nonetheless needs to constantly give back what he is given as he advances

on the path. The man walking the path with caution and perseverance experiences the great ascent, the climbing of the lofty heights, where the leaf gives way to the needle, and ultimately, where the rare trees are mere skeletons, stripped bare of their mantle of pointy appendages. Rising above the clouds, this man resembles these wooden pillars, letting go of all things as if they were leaves during the autumn, accepting to become a shell of his former self, feeling the frigid gusts pass around his emaciated body. Like a crane perched on a branch towering over the entire world, ready to leave the earth to soar in the loftiest heavens, his gaze is turned away from his brethren, from life itself. It is a disgrace for those down below, as the fruits of his lengthy and tortuous journey are kept to himself, rather than shared with those who have yet to find the strength and the will to perform such a liberating ascent. Attached to what he has received on the peak, the gift then becomes a potent poison. Wanting to keep his insight, he becomes blind to what surrounds him and to his own nature.

Furthermore, the individuals attached to their own selves are like frozen drops of water. They are separated by the absence of warmth, this cold that does not fundamentally change their nature as water but is enough to deny them its fluidity. Frozen solid, they cannot be merged with others, and they see themselves as unique, standing out from the rest of the earth, not belonging to the bulging ocean stirred up by the revolutions of the pale, silvery sphere passing through the night sky. During the day, when the blazing orb of fire gloriously climbs above the skyline, in a wondrous spectacle marrying bright, vivid colors as a grand display in the heavens, its fiery rays then gently touch these frozen drops, imparting heat to them. The men seeing themselves as standing out from the rest of nature are likewise illuminated by the insights discovered through their practice or the guidance of a brother. When one has received the marvelous present of illumination, the self should be released. The frozen drop should melt, letting the omnipresent downward pull of the earth spread it on the craggy face of the earth, where it will encounter other frozen drops, offering them its own warmth and contributing to their melting, with all becoming one, a lake or an ocean. Their nature has not changed. They always were water and always will be, but now, each drop has ceased to be, and there is only the vast body of water covering the planet. Refusing the light of the great luminary, or being reluctant to share its warmth with others, this would be a disgrace.

Walking the great path, many also come face to face with those who are blind to the way of the sky, who are angered by the vision of others following something that they cannot comprehend, seeing it as an attack on their world, a denial of their own values. With swords or chains, they impede their pilgrimage, even taking the lives of those who are blind

to life and death. Their children nonetheless walk in their footsteps, continuing the peregrination they courageously undertook, treading upon the skulls and bones of their parents, while the gods impassively observe the destiny of the dwellers of the earth. Unmoved by the rivers of blood watering the soil, uninvolved with the affairs of men, and unsympathetic to the deafening cries of the survivors, the holy ones often fail to protect the meek, to be the guardians of the devout. This absence of compassion and action is also a disgrace. To remain idle, comfortably sitting in no-thing-ness, pure and holy, is to pervert the gift that one has been graciously offered, and to soil one's heart. The compassionate embracer of the way of the sky therefore does not fear plunging back into the mire of the world to bravely pull out the indigent. He does not dread the great leap, the return to the filthy streets where the needy desperately implore help, leaving the tranquil heights behind, knowing that there is no difference between himself and them. They are him, and he is them, and thus, as long as even one remains down below, there his home should be.

Case 44 —Dongshan and the Memorial Service —洞山供真

Source: The Book of Serenity Case 49.

【中】

jǔ dòng shān gòng yǎng yún yán zhēn cì suì jǔ qián miǎo zhēn huò
舉。洞山供養[1] 雲巖真次遂舉前邈真[2] 話
yǒu sēng wèn yún yán dào zhī zhè shì yì zhī rú hé shān
有僧問：「雲巖道：『祇[3] 這是。』，意旨如何。」山
yún wǒ dāng shí jī cuò huì xiān shī yì sēng yún wèi shěn yún yán
云：「我當時幾錯會先師意。」僧云：「未審雲巖
huán zhī yǒu yě wú shān yún ruò bù zhī yǒu zhēng jiě rèn me dào
還知有也無。」山云：「若不知有，爭解恁麼道，
ruò zhī yǒu zhēng kěn rèn me dào
若知有爭肯恁麼道。」

[1] 【供養】 S:【供养】 [gòng yǎng]: "to make offerings [to the gods]" / "to perform a memorial service."

[2] 【邈真】 [miǎo zhēn]: "a portrait." A reference to the following story: "Just before leaving, Tung-shan asked, 'If, after many years, someone should ask if I am able to portray the Master's likeness, how should I respond?' After remaining quiet for a while, Yün-yen said, 'Just this person.'" (Source: Powell, William F. *The Record of Tung-shan.* Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 1986. Page 9).

[3] 【祇】 [zhǐ]: "only," equivalent to the modern Chinese 只 [zhǐ].

【日】

舉す。洞山、雲巖の眞を供養する次で、遂に前の眞を邈するの話を舉す。僧あり問う、「雲巖祇這れ是れと道う意旨如何。」山云く、「我當時幾ど過って先師の意を會す。」僧云く、「未審し雲巖還って有ることを知るや也た無しや。」山云く、「若し有ることを知らずんば爭でか恁麼に道うことを解せん、若し知ることあらば爭でか肯て恁麼に道わん。」

【E】

When Dongshan held a memorial service for Yunyan, before his portrait, he mentioned the talk he had previously with Yunyan about it.[1] A monk then asked: "When Yunyan said: 'It is just this!' what did he mean by that?" Dongshan said, "At that time, I almost misunderstood what the master meant." The monk said, "I wonder whether or not Yunyan really knew that 'it' is." Dongshan said, "If he did not know that 'it' is, how could he say like that? But if he knew that 'it' is, how did he dare say like that?"

[1] See Note 2 of the Chinese text.

Representation is always falsification. If you were asked to describe yourself, with words or a picture, so that those who have yet to be born would know who you were after you have exhausted your days, how would you do it? Some will inscribe their innermost hope, the ultimate lesson of their life, on a marble slate, while others will paint their own likeness on a white canvas, their face, what they perceive as the symbol of their individuality. One who has clearly seen his true face, one who has experienced the great death while the world considered him still living, will nonetheless only offer a succinct answer: "It is just this," perhaps extending his arms and opening up his hands as he utters this succinct explanation.

When one is unable to choose appropriate and eloquent words, and when he is incapable of selecting a boundary to his being, the most opportune thing to do is to go to the root of the world itself, the foundation that is closest to the hard ground under it, farthest from the lofty speculations of metaphysicians, the "down-to-earth," attached to what is experienced with the senses, touching his body. This foundation is the first word that emerged in the world, the one that designates anything and everything, without setting up frontiers between things, without arbitrarily delimiting what it shows: it is just "it," a word that is meaningless when it is not linked to the senses or other words. It is the most ambiguous but also the most precise, alone able to represent the very ambivalence of nature, its absence of boundaries, its wondrously puzzling indecisiveness. The foundation of the world is indeed the same as that of the earth and the skies. It is not a firmly established ground, but rather an abyss, a complete absence of ground, an open chasm engulfing all things, and where no thing can be found.[35] Impossible to describe, to put into words or to depict, it can just be pointed at, accompanied with a simple utterance: "It is this."

When one has seen "it," he sees that it is the best and only truthful representation of himself. Wherever he goes, he finds a pristine mirror, extended beyond his field of view. There is nothing besides it, and when this word is on the tip of his tongue, he holds the sky in his mouth, ready to swallow it whole, leaving only the great abyss, absolute no-thing-ness.[36]

Only the one who has experienced "it," has exhausted his self in "it," will be apt to wield this verbal weapon without hurting himself. The sons of the world, its diligent servants, will be revulsed by the vulgarity of designating it with this inelegant and impersonal pronoun. The solitary dweller of the abyss, the hermit of the great desert, will nonetheless have no such apprehensions. Only the inhabitants of the world care about not dirtying themselves with the mud of their cluttered citadel. The lonely wanderer does not see the difference between mud and silk, life and death, this and that. Being "it," perceiving only "it," he feels no shame while guiding others, thoughtlessly delving into the dung pile as if he walked into a palace, displaying its wondrous nature with each one of his words, each one of his actions, never departing from "it."

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[35]See: Roloff, Dietrich. *Cong-Rong-Lu – Aufzeichnungen aus der Klause der Gelassenheit: Die 100 Kôan des Shôyôroku.* Windpferd Verlagsgesellschaft mbH, 2008. Page 249: "Es gibt keinen Grund der Welt; anders gesagt, am Grund der Welt ist kein Grund - sondern ein Abgrund!"

[36]See Wansong's comment: "I now go on alone. Everywhere, I have no choice but to meet 'It.' 'It' is now really me. I am not 'it' now. One must understand it like this to conform with thusness." Translated by the author. Original Chinese: "我今獨自往。處處得逢渠。渠今正是我。我今不是渠。應須恁麼會方得契如如。" From: 《萬松老人評唱天童覺和尚頌古從容庵錄》。 CBETA (Case 49).

Case 45 —Caoshan's True Dharma-Body —曹山法身

Source: The Book of Serenity Case 52.

【中】

jǔ cáo shān wèn dé shàng zuò fó zhēn fǎ shēn yóu ruò xū
舉。曹山 問 德 尚座[1] ：「『佛真法身猶若虛
kōng yìng wù xiàn xíng rú shuǐ zhōng yuè zuò me shēng shuō gè yìng di dào
空，應物現形，如水中月』，[2] 作麼生說箇應底道
lǐ dé yún rú lǘ qù jǐng shān yún dào jí dà
理。」德 云：「如驢覷[3] 井。」山 云：「道即大
shài dào zhī dào dé bā chéng dé yún hé shàng yòu rú hé shān
曬[4] 道只道得八成。」德 云：「和尚又如何。」山
yún rú jǐng qù lǘ
云：「如井覷驢。」

[1] 【尚座】 [shàng zuò]: "a senior monk."

[2] A quote from the "Golden Light Sutra" (金光明經 in Chinese, "Suvarṇaprabhāsa Sūtra" सुवर्णप्रभासोत्तमसूत्रेन्द्रराज in Sanskrit).

[3] 【覷】 [qù]: "to watch."

[4] 【曬】 S:【晒】 [shài]: "to shed light [on something]."

【日】

こ そうざん とくしょうざ と ほとけ しんほっしん
舉す。曹山、德尚座に問う、「佛の眞法身は
な こくう も もの おう かたち げん
猶お虛空の若し、物に應じて形を現ずることは
すいちゅう つき ごと さもさん こ おう てい どうり
水中の月の如し。作麼生か箇の應ずる底の道理を
と とくいわ ろ い み ごと さん
說かん。」德云く、「驢の井を覷るが如し。」山
いわ い すなわ はなは い ただはちじょう い
云く、「道うことは即ち大曬だ道う、只八成を道い
え とくいわ おしょうまた いかん さんいわ い
得たり。」德云く、「和尚亦如何。」山云く、「井の
ろ み ごと
驢を覷るが如し。」

【E】

Caoshan asked Elder De: "'The true Dharma-body of Buddha is like the emptiness of the sky. It manifests its

form in accordance with things, just like the moon on water.'[1] How would one explain the principle of this correspondence?" De said, "It is like a donkey looking into a well." Caoshan said, "This sheds ample light on the matter, but it says only eighty percent of it." De said, "What would the Master say?" Caoshan said, "It is like a well looking at a donkey."

[1] A quote. See note 2 of the Chinese text.

When winter has passed, and the pale, snowy vestment of the earth has thawed, finally alleviating the thirst of the dry ground with pure, fresh water, the living finally dare to venture out of their lair to enjoy the pleasant warmth of the spring nights. Walking around a pond, whose water is perfectly still, impassive as its surface faces the constellations and galaxies unhurriedly passing through the celestial vault, the stroller suddenly notices the image of the glowing moon reflected upon it, appearing as a mirage, floating and timidly dancing. Water and sky face each other like two mirrors, with each one of them losing sight of whether they see themselves or the other, with both becoming one.

The walker stands above the water, under the sky. He quietly observes the reflection of the silvery orb, the pale luminary of the night, and compares it with its source. Prudently approaching further, his own image appears next to the image of the celestial body, and he is then struck by a realization: the illusory nature of his world, which is like this image offered to him by the pond to behold. The moon and he are mere representations of the truth of nature, the foundation of all things. Our mind, our self, is an ethereal representation, a reflection of our essence, distorted by the movements of our reason. We see ourselves, the moon, and the stars in the face of the water, but there is only water there, a single mass, offering a vision to those above it but itself concealed by this image, with the water itself remaining unseen.

Attentively gazing at the reflection, this abyss where the infinity of the heavens is married with the depths of the earthly waters, the stroller then begins to feel the abyss gazing back at him.[37] He sees himself from the point of view of the water, becoming water himself, observing this man standing out from it, staring into himself. He begins to forget whether he is a man looking at his reflection in the water, or the water

[37] See the famous aphorism: "If you gaze long into an abyss, the abyss also gazes into you." Original German: "Und wenn du lange in einen Abgrund blickst, blickt der Abgrund auch in dich hinein." From: Nietzsche, Friedrich Wilhelm. *Jenseits von Gut und Böse: Vorspiel einer Philosophie der Zukunft.* C.G. Naumann, 1886. Page 102.

looking at a man standing out from it. He experiences an ec-stasy, a standing out from himself, stripped of his ego, becoming the moon itself, slipping into the skin of the ocean and being dissolved in it, considering himself to be the surface reflecting the vastness and glory of the skies in their totality, finally letting go of the desire to understand, the thirst for limpidity. The water does not need the eyes of man to be an image of the skies.[38] It is only man himself who relies on such reflections to grasp the objects filling the earth and the skies, but when he joins the watery expanse, becoming one with it, there is no longer an observer and an observed, no water and no sky, no man and no moon. What is just is, water looking at water, the crest of a wave surreptitiously glancing at the sea before promptly vanishing, the sky looking at itself, without a trace of reflection, without a shred of thought, only a magnificent, quiet scenery, the all-encompassing abyss, the depths joined with the heights, the truth of being.

Case 46 —Shoushan's Bride —首山新婦

Source: The Book of Serenity Case 65.

【中】

jǔ sēng wèn shǒu shān rú hé shì fó shān yún xīn fù
舉。僧問首山：「如何是佛。」山云：「新婦
qí lǘ ā jiā qiān
騎驢阿家牽。」[1]

[1] 【牽】 S:【牽】 [qiān]: "to pull" (an animal by the bridle).

【日】

こ そう しゅざん と いか こ ほとけ
舉す。僧、首山に問う、「如何なるか是れ佛。」
さんいわ しんぷろ の あこひ
山云く、「新婦驢に騎れば阿家牽く。」

【E】

A monk asked Shoushan: "What is a Buddha?" Shoushan said, "A bride rides a donkey, and her mother-in-law leads it by the bridle."[1]

[38] See: Roloff, Dietrich. *Cong-Rong-Lu – Aufzeichnungen aus der Klause der Gelassenheit: Die 100 Kôan des Shôyôroku.* Windpferd Verlagsgesellschaft mbH, 2008. (Case 45) : "Einern Brunnen fehlt nichts, wenn sich kein Esel findet, der aus ihm trinkt; ein Brunnen bedarf, ganz allgemein gesagt, keines anderen, der sein Wasser nutzt; er ist einfach da."

[1] A way to introduce the bride to the inhabitants of a village.

When one is asked about the fundamental essence of being, the most adequate answer would be to point out the scenery unfolding right before one's eyes. Standing at a busy crossroads, one sees a bride riding a donkey, and her mother-in-law leads it by the bridle. Impassively watching this, as one watches a stream of water running down toward the sea, forming an indistinguishable whole, the spectator's mind is akin to the mind of the animal: not letting a single thought arise, it simply calmly contemplates the work of the skies displayed in front of this man's eyes, with the earth and the world built upon it being carried along in their course.[39] The three living things lose their individuality, forming three limbs of the same body, which is the great earth itself, perfectly united with the heavens above.

The men of the world, watching this all too ordinary and yet potentially life-changing event, will volubly comment on the propriety of the conduct of each character in this scene of life. Seeing disorder, transgression of tradition, or strangeness in this perfectly harmonious display, they lose all hope of seeing who they themselves are, what unites them with all that falls within the reach of their gaze.[40] The bride may have ridden the old mother, or the donkey may have been carried by both women, this would have been of no importance. The reality, the tangibility of what unfolds before their eyes, is in itself a perfect manifestation of the truth of being, seen beyond the blinkers of our world. The wise spectator does not need to follow them to enjoy the festivities. Tonight is his wedding day. Tonight, he welcomes a daughter-in-law into his household. Tonight, he will graze on the freshly grown grass in a luxuriant meadow, without an instant of reflection, only feeling the bliss of the peaceful contemplation of the truth passing in front of him at this very instant.

Case 47 —Baizhang's Fox —百丈野狐

Source: The Gateless Barrier Case 2.

A less complete version can be found in Book of Serenity, case 8.[41]

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[39] See: 神保如天. 《従容録通解》。東京：無我山房, 1915. Page 431 (Case 65): 「三身即一」.

[40] See: Yamada, Kou'un, *Shôyôroku (Book of Equanimity)* [Unpublished manuscript]: "If you start chopping logic about how things being turned upside down or the like, Buddha is lost. Even things that appear to be wrong are just as they are."

[41] See Book of Serenity, case 8: 舉。百丈上堂。常有一老人。聽法隨眾散去。一日不去

【中】

bǎi zhàng hé shàng fán cān cì yǒu yì lǎo rén cháng suí zhòng tīng fǎ zhòng
百丈 和尚凡參次，有一老人，常隨眾聽法，眾
rén tuì lǎo rén yì tuì hū yí rì bú tuì shī suì wèn miàn qián lì
人退，老人亦退。忽一日不退，師遂問：「面前立
zhě fù shì hé rén lǎo rén yún nuò mǒu jiǎ fēi rén yě yú
者，復是何人。」老人云：「諾。某甲非人也。於
guò qù jiā yè fó shí céng zhù cǐ shān yīn xué rén wèn dà xiū xíng
過去 迦葉 佛時，曾住此山，因學人問：『大修行
di rén huán luò yīn guǒ yě wú mǒu jiǎ duì yún bú luò yīn guǒ wǔ
底人還落因果也無。』某甲對云：『不落因果。』五
bǎi shēng duò yě hú shēn jīn qǐng hé shàng dài yì zhuǎn yǔ guì tuō yě hú
百生墮野狐身。今請和尚代一轉語，貴[1] 脫野狐。」
suì wèn dà xiū xíng di rén huán luò yīn guǒ yě wú shī yún bú mèi
遂問：「大修行底人還落因果也無。」師云：「不昧[2]
yīn guǒ lǎo rén yú yán xià dà wù zuò lí yún mǒu jiǎ yǐ tuō yě
因果。」老人於言下大悟，作禮云：「某甲已脫野
hú shēn zhù zài shān hòu gǎn gào hé shàng qǐ yī wáng sēng shì lì shī
狐身，住在山後，敢告和尚，乞依亡僧事例。」師
lìng wéi nà bái chuí gào zhòng shí hòu sòng wáng sēng dà zhòng yán
令維那[3] 白槌[4] 告眾：「食後送亡僧。」，大眾言
yì yí zhòng jiē ān niè pán táng yòu wú rén bìng hé gù rú shì
議：「一眾皆安，涅槃堂[5] 又無人病，何故如是。」
shí hòu zhī jiàn shī lǐng zhòng zhì shān hòu yán xià yī zhàng tiāo chū yì sǐ yě
食後，只見師領眾，至山後巖下，以杖挑出一死野
hú nǎi yī huǒ zàng shī zhì wǎn shàng táng jǔ qián yīn yuán huáng bò biàn
狐，乃依火葬。師至晚上堂，舉前因緣， 黃蘗 便
wèn gǔ rén cuò zhī duì yì zhuǎn yǔ duò wǔ bǎi shēng yě hú shēn zhuǎn
問：「古人錯祇[6] 對一轉語，墮五百生野狐身；轉
zhuǎn bù cuò hé zuò gè shén me shī yún jìn qián lái yǔ yī dào
轉不錯，合作箇甚麼。」師云：「近前來，與伊道。」
huáng bò suì jìn qián yǔ shī yì zhǎng shī pāi shǒu xiào yún jiāng wèi hú
黃蘗 遂近前，與師一掌，師拍手笑云：「將謂胡
xū chì gèng yǒu chì xū hú
鬚[7] 赤，更有赤鬚胡。」

[1] 【貴】 S:【贵】 [guì]: (honorific) “your.”

[2] 【昧】 [mèi]: “to conceal.”

[3] 【維那】 S:【维那】 [wéi nà]: a position in a Buddhist temple. Someone in charge of managing the affairs of the temple. This word is a transliteration of the Sanskrit कर्मदान [karmadāna], literally meaning: “[the one who] gives things.”

[4] 【白槌】 [bái chuí]: in a Buddhist context, it designates the use of a stick to mark the beginning or the end of a ritual. The first character here means “announcement.”

[5] 【涅槃堂】 [niè pán táng]: “infirmary.” Literally “the Nirvana Hall.”

丈乃問立者何人老人云。某甲於過去迦葉佛時。曾住此山有學人問。大修行底人還落因果也無對他道不落因果墮野狐身五百生今請和尚代一轉語丈云。不昧因果老人於言下大悟。

[6] 【衹】[zhǐ] variant of 只 , meaning “only.”

[7] 【胡鬚】 [hú xū]: “a beard.”

【日】

舉す。百丈和尚、凡そ參の次で、一老人有り、常に衆に隨って法を聽く。衆人退けば老人も亦た退く。忽ち一日退かず。師遂に問う、「面前に立つ者は復た是れ何人ぞ。」老人云く、「諾、某甲は非人なり。過去迦葉佛の時に於いて曾つて此の山に住す。因みに學人問う、大修行底の人、還って因果に落つるや也た無や。某甲對えて云く、不落因果と。五百生野狐身に墮す。今請う和尚、一轉語を代り、貴えに野狐を脱せしめよ。」遂に問う、「大修行底の人、還って因果に落つるや也た無や。」師云く、「不昧因果。」老人言下に於いて大悟し、作禮して云く、「某甲、已に野狐身を脱して山後に住在す。敢て和尚に告ぐ、乞うらくは、亡僧の事例に依れ。」師、維那をして白槌して衆に告げしむ、「食後に亡僧を送らん」と。大衆言議すらく、「一衆皆な安く、涅槃堂に又た人の病む無し。何が故ぞ是くの如くなる」と。食後に只だ師の衆を領じて山後の巖下に至り、杖を以って一死野狐を挑出して、乃ち火葬に依らしむるを見る。師、晩に至って上堂、前の因縁を舉す。黄檗

すなわ　と　こじんあやま　いってんご　したい　ごひゃくしょう
便ち問う、「古人錯って一轉語を祇對し、五百生
やこしん　だ　てんてんあやま　まさこ　なに
野狐身に墮す。轉轉錯らずんば、合に箇の甚麼に
な　しいわ　きんぜんらい　かれ　ためい
か作るべき。」師云く、「近前來。伊れが與に道わ
おうばく　つい　きんぜん　し　いつしょう　あたえ　し
ん。」黄檗、遂に近前して師に一掌を與う。師、
て　う　わら　いわ　まさ　おも　こしゅしゃく
手を拍って笑って云く、「將に謂えり胡鬚赤と、
さら　しゃくしゅこあ
更に赤鬚胡有り。」

【E】

Once, when Baizhang instructed his congregation, an old man was often there to hear the Dharma. Each time, when the congregation left, so did he. But one day, he remained there, and the teacher asked him: “The man standing in front of me now, who is he?” The old man replied: “Indeed, this one is not a man, but in the past, he was a man, at the time of Kashyapa Buddha. He lived on this mountain, and one student asked him: “Is a great practitioner still subject to the law of cause and effect?” This one replied to him: ‘He is not subject to the law of cause and effect.’ Then he became stuck in the body of a fox for five hundred rebirths. This one now begs the master for a ‘turning word’, so that he may be freed from this fox body.” He then asked: “Is a great practitioner still subject to the law of cause and effect?” The teacher said, “The law of cause and effect is not concealed.” Hearing the words of Baizhang, the old man experienced a great enlightenment. He made a deep bow and said, “This one is now free from the fox’s body. He will leave it in his dwelling place, behind this mountain. Please, he asks that a funeral be held for it, according to the rite of a monk’s burial.”

Baizhang then gave an order through the rector to make an announcement: “After the meal, a funeral for a monk will be held,” but members of the congregation said, “Everyone is well, and there is no one in the infirmary, so what is happening?” After the meal, Baizhang led the monks behind the mountain, at the foot of a cliff. He dragged out the

corpse of a wild fox with his staff and then cremated the corpse according to the burial rite of a monk. On that evening, the teacher went to the hall and told them the aforementioned story about the law of cause and effect. At that point, Huangbo asked Baizhang: "Just because the man of the ancient era gave a wrong 'turning word', he was stuck in the body of a fox for five hundred rebirths. Now, if one were asked many similar questions and always replied correctly, what would happen to him?" Baizhang said, "Let him come before me, and I will tell him." Huangbo went near Baizhang, and he then slapped the teacher's face with his hand. Baizhang clapped his hands and laughed, saying: "I thought the barbarian's beard was red, but now I have a red-bearded barbarian!"

Losing track of how many springs have passed since we took the first step of our journey, having climbed great mountains to raise ourselves above the world, up to the clouds, may give us the impression that we are detached from the unforgiving power of the skies. The enormous wheels of the heavens continuously revolve, inconspicuously carrying the living throughout the vast emptiness surrounding them, and the lofty ones often think of themselves as free from their work. Earth and sky yet implacably and scrupulously follow the order set by the way of the sky itself, and as sons of the two realms, the living are ruled by these laws of nature. Through a long practice or as the result of an instantaneous enlightenment, one may free oneself from the burden of the world, the yoke of things, achieving a perfect detachment from the arbitrariness of words and ideas, products of the mind. Ascending above the clouds of the world, descending below its foundations, one may be free from it, but even though he may delude himself into thinking that this would imply absolute freedom, this is only the ultimate mirage clouding the mind of the man on the way.

To depart from the world, to leave behind the great citadel of things erected by the sons of men since the advent of their kind, is to venture into the great desert, to step into the place where there is no "heat" or "cold," no "good" or "evil," and even no "cause" and "consequence." There, all the same, lies a formidable trap for the explorer of the boundless wasteland, the place without things, and a great many have fallen into it. This place is indeed utterly devoid of things, as pure no-thing-ness, but it is not empty. The world and the desert are always one, with the difference between them being only the outlook that man has of them.

The world is built of earth, and it securely rests upon it, encompassed by the heavens at all times, no matter our state of mind. To venture into no-thing-ness is to see our surroundings as pure earth and sky rather than a heap of things, perceiving it as a seamless whole that is itself then released to leave only raw perception of this no-thing-ness. This, despite this fact, does not nullify the reality of the earth and the sky. To let go of the myriads of things to plunge into oneness indeed does not free us from the yoke of the laws of nature. To be voluntarily blind to the worldly concepts of "cause" and "consequence," seeing only the whole like a gigantic whirlwind, does not free us from causes and consequences themselves. In the land without "heat" or "cold," the wrath of the skies may still kill you, even though only those still dwelling in the world of things would perceive the distinction between life and death. Having crushed the chains of the world does not imply a mastery over the earth and the skies. We will not stop the heavenly wheels with our bare hands, but will rather be crushed by them, even after a lifetime of practice, and even when we have gained absolute freedom from the yoke of things, having no-thing-ness as our home. We may be blind to "cause" and "consequence," as things of the world, but we cannot conceal the consequences themselves, and they are manifested on the earth and in the skies.

A key particularity of the life of the desert hermit, the dweller of no-thing-ness, is for all that his attitude toward the events filling up his existence. Caught in the great turbulence that comes from the revolutions of the heavenly wheels, he is like a rag-doll carried by a hurricane, with a smile on its face. He experiences causes and consequences in his flesh, but only perceives the whole chain that they form, without distinguishing each one of them separately. His body is ineluctably eroded by their tumultuous flow, but he is neither born nor living nor dead. He is a man, a fox, a stone, or a star, nothing and everything. He dies each day at night and is resurrected at dawn, waking from the world of dreams and things, to once again immerse himself in the experience of no-thing-ness, running into the great desert, his true home.

Furthermore, the reach of the world stops at the frontier of the citadel of things, and thus, to be mistaken about the use of words and sentences, things of the world, is of no consequence for the earth and the skies. One will not be able to call death upon himself with a roll of the tongue, but one may call for an executioner with mere words. Man is a creature standing between earth and world, a living thing that can deal with immaterial things, can construct towers within his mind that are based upon clouds, but he also is an inhabitant of the earth, made of flesh and bone, able to interact with it. When provoked with words, or when one tries to entrap him, man can himself become an agent of

the law of causes and consequences, becoming an instrument of the way itself, letting his hands be guided by the flow of nature, the work of the skies, rather than his own whims. His palm may strike the cheek of the one intending to strike him, offering a lesson on the consequences of one's actions, but when he meets someone who equally lets himself be used by the way of the sky, their palms will meet at the same instant, and laughter will resound throughout the air, as a celebration of the marvelous harmony of nature.

Case 48 —The Ancient Buddha Did Not Become a Buddha —大通智勝

Source: The Gateless Barrier Case 9.

【中】

xīng yáng ràng hé shàng yīn sēng wèn dà tōng zhì shèng fó shí jié zuò
興陽讓 和尚因僧問：「大通智勝佛[1] 十劫[2] 坐
dào chǎng fó fǎ bú xiàn qián bù dé chéng fó dào shí rú hé ràng
道場，佛法不現前，不得成佛道時，如何。」讓
yuē qí wèn shén dì dāng sēng yún jì shì zuò dào chǎng wèi
曰：「其問甚諦當。」[3] 僧 云：「既是坐道場，為
shén me bù dé chéng fó dào ràng yuē wèi yī bù chéng fó
甚麼不得成佛道。」讓 曰：「為伊不成佛。」

[1] 【大通智勝佛】 [dà tōng zhì shèng fó]: "the Buddha of Great-Penetrating-Wisdom-Victory." A translation of the Sanskrit name: Mahābhijñā-jñānābhibhū (महाभिज्ञाज्ञानाभिभू). This Buddha is said to have appeared eons ago and to have taught the Lotus Sutra, as recounted in the seventh chapter of the Lotus Sutra itself. (See: 「又作大通眾慧如來、大通慧如來。即出現於過去三千塵點劫以前，演說法華經之佛名。〔正法華經卷四、大智度論卷三十二、法華經玄義卷一上、法華文句卷七下〕」 From: 慈怡. 《佛光大辭典》。北京图书馆出版社 , 2004.)

[2] 【劫】 [jié]: An abbreviation of 劫波 [jié bō] "kalpa" / "eon."

[3] 【諦當】 S:【谛当】 [dì dāng]: "to correspond" / "to be appropriate."

【日】

こ こうよう じょうおしょう ちな そう と だいつう
舉す。興陽の讓和尚、因みに僧問う、「大通
ちしょうぶつ じっこう ざどうじょう ぶっぽう ふ げんぜん ふとくじょうぶつどう
智勝佛、十劫坐道場、佛法不現前、不得成佛道の
とき いかん じょういわ そ もんはなは たいとう そう
時如何。」讓曰く、「其の問甚だ諦當なり。」僧
いわ すで こ すわどうじょう なん ふとくじょうぶつ
云く、「既に是れ坐道場、甚麼としてか不得成佛
どう じょういわ かれ ふじょうぶつ た
道なる。」讓曰く、「伊が不成佛なるが爲めなり。」

【E】

A monk asked Xingyang: "The Buddha of Great-Penetrating-Wisdom-Victory[1] sat in meditation for ten kalpas[2] the Dharma did not manifest, and he failed to become a Buddha. Why was that?" Xingyang replied: "The answer is in the question." The monk asked: "Since the Buddha sat in meditation [for so long], why did he fail to become a Buddha?" Xingyang said, "Because he did not 'become' a Buddha."

[1] "The Buddha of Great-Penetrating-Wisdom-Victory": See note 1 of the Chinese text.

[2] "Kalpas": See note 2 of the Chinese text.

The way of the sky is shown to those who are not looking for it. The will of man frequently resists it, and thus the flow may appear troubled to the observer. One may practice for entire eons while eagerly waiting for a revelation, and it will come immediately to the indolent, who has only for an instant released his grip upon his own self and widely opened his heart to what surrounds him and what he himself is, but failed to see until this point. To sit and wait is vain if one's mind is still reaching for things, attempting to attain and to gain something out of this practice. The revelation that comes is not a fundamental transformation of one's essence, the attainment of a new stage of his existence, but merely the realization of his true face, of what he has always been, even before his birth, and of what he will be after his death. It means to open up his eyes to the plain truth of the earth and the skies, to the alluring delusions of the world, as well as to the remarkable revealing power of this man-made realm. It is an act of appropriation of being, before one lets himself be dispossessed of all things, including the very notion of "being."

The awakened is no different from any other man. He was once asleep, lulled by the melodious songs of the world, but his eyes are now opened, and he sees the way of the sky embracing all that is, without his nature having been subjected to the slightest change, plunged in the same exact surroundings as before. Bathed in the warm splendor of the day, having forgotten the enchanting dreams that come with the darkness of the night, there is no sleep or awakening, no past and no future, no failure nor success. One has always been awake, and will forever remain so, and thus he never "became" awake. The brightness of the sun may appear to be concealed at dusk and to gloriously come back at dawn, but

the radiant star of life never ceases to pour out its vivifying brilliance, even for an instant. The night is a mirage, a lie of the world, an illusion of the mind, and we are all enlightened, even before we were pushed out of the womb and thrown onto the earth, into the world, and we will still remain pure light when we crawl back into the dark entrails of the earth, once our strength will be completely exhausted.

Case 49 —Qingshui Is Alone and Poor —清税孤貧

Source: The Gateless Barrier Case 10.

【中】

cáo shān hé shàng yīn sēng wèn yún qīng shuì gū pín qī shī zhèn jì shān yún shuì shé lí shuì yìng nuò shān qīng yuán bái jiā jiǔ sān zhǎn chī liǎo yóu dào wèi zhān chún

曹山和尚因僧問云：「清税孤貧，乞師賑濟。」[1] 山云：「税闍梨。」[2] 税應：「諾。」山曰：「青原白家酒三盞，[3] 喫了，猶道未沾唇。」

[1] 【賑濟】 S:【賑济】 [zhèn jì]: “to give relief.”

[2] 【闍梨】 S:【阇梨】 [shé lí]: “a Buddhist teacher.” The transliteration of the Sanskrit word आचार्य [ācārya]. It may also be written 闍黎 .

[3] 【盞】 S:【盏】 [zhǎn]: “a small cup.”

【日】

こ そうざんおしょう ちな そう と いわ せいぜい こ ひん こ し しんさい さんいわ ぜいじゃ り ぜいおうだく さんいわ せいげんはっけ さけ さんさん きっ おわ な い いま くちびるうるお

舉す。曹山和尚、因みに僧問うて云く、「清税孤貧、乞う師、賑濟したまえ。」山云く、「税闍梨。」税應諾す。山曰く、「清原白家の酒、三盞喫し了って、猶お道う未だ唇を沾さずと。」

【E】

A monk named Qingshui inquired of Caoshan: “Qingshui is alone and poor. Will you provide him with some relief?” Caoshan said, “Teacher Qingshui!” Qingshui replied: “Yes.” Caoshan said, “This one has already drunk three cups of wine

from the [famous] White House in Qingyuan, and still he says that he hasn't wetted his lips!"

It is all too natural for our eyes to be turned toward the most distant, to the farthest horizon, and thus one may easily forget to watch his own steps, what is in his immediate vicinity, within the reach of his other senses. One tends to notice what he lacks and the possessions of his neighbors, but also to be blind to what he stands upon. To be poor may either be seen as a blessing or a curse, depending on whether we are someone belonging to the world or to no-thing-ness. In the first case, it represents an impediment to one's existence, a denial of power and control over his life and the lives of other men. Without riches, he cannot acquire goods and dominate others, and is unable to convince them to devote their strength and their efforts to his own needs and his luxuries. For the latter, on the other hand, to be poor is to be free from the yoke of things, to genuinely enjoy everything by possessing nothing, being completely blind to the boundaries delimiting them and to their bonds with their owner. To be alone may imply suffering from isolation and ostracism by one's peers, lacking companionship or intimacy, and thus we feel hurt, our ego shriveled up, our self gravely wounded at its core. It may, despite this, also mean that one is not attached to his own individuality, proudly announcing that he alone is honored upon the earth, under the sky,[42] with all beings forming a single being, the whole of the heavens. When hearing the man declaring himself to be poor and alone, arduous would it be to determine with certainty to which kind he belongs, a determination that is, even so, itself superfluous, as one should hear both and neither in the same utterance.

You say you are poor and alone, but you fail to see that you are standing upon the greatest treasure that there is! You desperately beg for relief, but those of whom you ask do not have a single thing to give! The entire world is in your hands. The earth is your footstool, and the heavens are your umbrella. You hold on to myriads of things, and you outrageously dare to ask for more from the ascetic desert dwellers, those sleeping on the dust, their way lit by sun-rays and moonlight alone. How do you not cover your face in shame?

Again, you say you are poor and alone, seeing yourself as having reached liberation from the burden of possession, emancipation from the

[42] A reference to a sentence that Shakyamuni Buddha proclaimed just after his birth, according to the Buddhist tradition: "above and below the heavens, I alone am honored." This quote appears in the Dīrgha Āgama, 長阿含經 in Chinese. The sentence in Chinese is as follows: 「天上天下，唯我獨尊」 [tiān shàng tiān xià, wéi wǒ dú zūn].

curse of attachment. You consider yourself to be an ascetic of the way, having refrained from gorging yourself on the wine of the world, whose name is “illusion” and that enraptures the mind of its inhabitants. And yet you are still ensnared in the vacuities of men, prisoner of the great citadel towering in the midst of the boundless desert, as you are now begging for some-thing, no matter what it is! Your beard is stained with the crimson color of the fruit of the grape. Your lips are glowing with the moisture of the sweet, inebriating nectar, and yet you profess to be dying of thirst! How do you not cover your face in shame?

The one pronouncing the accusatory sentence may for all that be drunk with the poison of the world. He may fail to see the poverty and loneliness of the one facing him. As soon as he opens his mouth, the wine of the world rushes into his throat and flows into his veins, bringing him instantly back to the realm of the sweetest illusions, the land of the merry drunkards bursting into song, who think of themselves as lords of the earth, kings of the heavens. Becoming intimate with silence, familiar with the darkness, one may then begin to hear the silence of the busiest marketplace of the great city, and see the darkness of the summer noon. One may finally begin to perceive the riches of the one who has nothing, the immeasurable wealth of the one who has given up everything, every thing. How fortunate the man with none!

Case 50 —Xuefeng’s Turtle-Nosed Snake —雪峰鱉鼻蛇

Source: The Blue Cliff Record Case 22.

This case is identical to the Book of Serenity, case 24.

【中】

jǔ xuě fēng shì zhòng yún nán shān yǒu yì tiáo biē bí shé rǔ
舉。雪峯 示眾云：「南山有一條鼈[1] 鼻蛇，汝
děng zhū rén qiè xū hǎo kàn cháng qìng yún jīn rì táng zhōng dà yǒu
等諸人，切須[2] 好看。」長慶 云：「今日堂中，大有
rén sàng shēn shī mìng sēng jǔ sì xuán shā xuán shā yún xū shì léng
人喪身失命。」僧舉似 玄沙。玄沙 云：「須是 稜
xiōng shì dé suī rán rú cǐ wǒ jí bù rèn me sēng yún hé shàng
兄始得。[3] 雖然如此，我即不恁麼。」僧云：「和尚
zuò me shēng xuán shā yún yòng nán shān zuò shén me yún mén yī
作麼生。」玄沙 云：「用南山作什麼。」雲門 以
zhǔ zhàng cuān xiàng xuě fēng miàn qián zuò pà shì
拄杖攛[4] 向 雪峯 面前，作怕勢。

[1] 【鼈】 S:【鱉】 [biē]: “a freshwater soft-shelled turtle.” Variant of 鱉 .

[2] 【切須】 S:【切须】 [qiè xū]: “must [do something].”

[3] 【始】 [shǐ]: Here, this word is equivalent to the modern Chinese particle 才 [cái], meaning “just” / “only if.”

[4] 【攛】 S:【撺】 [cuān]: “to throw.”

【日】

舉(こ)す。雪峰(せっぽう)、衆(しゅ)に示(しめ)して云(いわ)く、「南山(なんざん)に一條(いちじょう)の鼈鼻蛇(べっぴじゃ)あり。汝等諸人(なんじらしょにん)、切(せつ)に須(すべか)らく好(よ)く看(み)るべし。」長慶(ちょうけい)云(いわ)く、「今日(こんにち)、堂中(どうちゅう)にて大(たしか)に人(ひと)の喪身失命(そうしんしつみょう)する有(あ)り。」僧(そう)、玄沙(げんしゃ)に舉似(こじ)す。玄沙(げんしゃ)云(いわ)く、「須是(すべか)らく稜兄(りょうひん)にして始(はじ)めて得(よ)し。此(かく)の如(ごと)くなりと雖然(いえど)も、我(わが)は即(すなわ)ち恁麼(いんも)にせず。」僧(そう)云(いわ)く、「和尚(おしょう)作麼生(さもさん)。」玄沙(げんしゃ)云(いわ)く、「南山(なんざん)を用(もっ)て什麼(なに)か作(せ)ん。」雲門(うんもんじゅう)拄杖(しゅじょう)を以(もっ)て雪峰(せっぽう)の面前(めんぜん)に攛向(つきつ)けて、怕(おそ)るる勢(しぐさ)を作(な)す。

【E】

Xuefeng, instructing the assembly, said, “There’s a turtle-nosed snake on the southern mountain. All of you should watch for it carefully!” Changching said, “Today, in the temple hall, there are many people who have been dispossessed from their bodies and have lost their lives!” A monk told this to Xuansha, and Xuansha said, “Only Elder Brother Leng[1] could say this. Nevertheless, as for me, I wouldn’t say it like that.” The monk asked: “What would the master say, then?” Xuansha replied; “What’s the use of saying ‘on the southern mountain’?” Yunmen threw his staff in front of Xuefeng and feigned being frightened.

[1] “Elder Brother Leng,” that is, Changching.

The greatest danger is the one that remains unknown until it is faced directly. One should therefore always remain watchful, no matter

where he is, no matter whether he has retreated in the safety of his home or is wandering through tall grass. If we are told that the great danger should be expected there, with a precise description of what we will encounter, we should be doubly cautious. To believe that we know the nature of the threat and its location is indeed the surest way to be caught off guard. Such a description should thus be taken as a further warning, a subtle bait to test our attention. Being told that it comes in the form of a deadly snake, we should watch for a tongue. Being told that it is found in the south, we should expect it in the north as well. The eyes wide open, we observe our surroundings, without fear, eagerly waiting for the encounter that may change the course of our life, the danger that we will overcome, and thereby be born anew, having shed our old skin, crawling upon the face of the earth rather than attempting to reach out to the lofty heights of the world.

The greatest risk to one's life is to face death itself, but only someone who is attached to his own self will dread this encounter. One who possesses nothing cannot be robbed of what he has not. Only one who sees himself as standing out from the rest of what is encompassed by the heavens feels threatened by death, considering that he is an island of life in the midst of an ocean of death, without seeing that the island is made of the same earthly substance as the water, noticing only the appearance and being blind to its underlying foundation. Death may therefore be a discovery of the truth of nature, the collapse of the walls separating the self from the whole, the world from the skies. Hearing someone warn us of the presence of a serpent that may end our existence, as a being attached to his self, his words are like razor-sharp fangs piercing our eardrums. We feel the venom of truth injected in our bloodstream and numbness swiftly overtaking our body and mind. Beholding the unicity of all that is, struck to our core by the animal's tail, shattering our heart, we feel the sweet embrace of death, the end of our life, the fading of our self. Dispossessed of our body, robbed of our life, all that is left of us is no-thing, a speck of dust caught in a raging storm.

The dead man nonetheless soon resurrects. The speck of dust is soon watered by the rain and is buried in the ground. It then reveals itself to be a seed, as a new life suddenly sprouts from the ground, showered profusely with the ethereal gold descending from the fiery orb throning in the sky. The self returns, but it now sees its own face clearly. The plant all of a sudden turns into a serpent, prudently slithering upon the ground, ready to, in turn, rob others of their lives, depriving them of their illusions, bringing them into the obscure belly of the earth, far from the lights of the world. There is no longer any north, south, east, or west. The venomous snake is coiled around the entire planet. It hides inside every single object of the world. It is the walking staff of an elder and the toy of an infant. It is the tree bordering our garden and the

chopsticks with which we eat our rice. Each thing is poisonous. The sea is filled with venom. The earth is a heap of toxic dust. Each instant, the living may be subdued by these dangers, seeing their life end, their world leveled to the ground, and then, they wander aimlessly in the great wasteland, unable to distinguish east from west, but still feel no fear, or anguish, as they are the serpent. They are the tree of life. They are the gigantic earth. They are the majestic sky.

Case 51 —Sun-Face Buddha, Moon-Face Buddha —日面佛月面佛

Source: The Blue Cliff Record Case 3.

This case is identical to the Book of Serenity, case 36.

【中】

jǔ mǎ dà shī bù ān yuàn zhǔ wèn hé shàng jìn rì zūn hòu
舉。馬大師不安。院主問：「和尚近日尊候[1]
rú hé dà shī yún rì miàn fó yuè miàn fó
如何。」大師云：「日面佛，月面佛。」[2]

[1] 【尊候】 [zūn hòu]: A term of respect toward a superior: "In origin, 候 is a noun referring to the 'state' or 'shape' of things. Therefore, 'zunhou' 尊候 originally meant 'your venerable shape' and referred to the state or appearance of the recipient, and this, in turn, came to refer simply to the recipient him- or herself." (See: Kin, Bunkyo. *Literary Sinitic and East Asia: A Cultural Sphere of Vernacular Reading.* BRILL, 2021. Pages 208—209)

[2] 【日面佛，月面佛】 [rì miàn fó, yuè miàn fó]: The "sun-face Buddha" is said to have lived 1800 years, whereas the "moon-face Buddha" only lived a single day. (See: 「如月面佛壽一日夜故佛名經第六云妙聲佛壽六十百千歲智自在佛壽十二千歲威德自在佛壽七十六千歲摩醯首羅佛壽一億歲梵聲佛壽十億歲大眾自在佛壽六十千歲勝聲佛壽百億歲月面佛壽一日夜日面佛壽一千八百歲。」 From: 《大方廣佛華嚴經疏鈔會本》。 CBETA.)

【日】

こ ば だいし やす いんじゅ と おしょう
舉す。馬大師安らかならず。院主問う、「和尚、
きんじつそんこう いかん だいし いわ にちめんぶつ がちめんぶつ
近日尊候如何。」大師曰く、「日面佛、月面佛。」

【E】

Great Master Ma was unwell. The chief priest of the temple asked: "How is the venerable master feeling these days?" The Great Master said, "Sun-face Buddha; Moon-face Buddha."[1]

[1] See note 2 of the Chinese text.

How frail is a man in comparison with the countless spheres adorning the celestial vault, as they pass through the ages, enduring, unscathed by the work of the skies. The sun brightly radiates during the day, unleashing a flood of brilliance and warmth upon the dry land and the sea, while the gentle glow of the moon sprinkles ashen reflections on puddles and lakes alike during the night, as a fine brush of light painting a dark canvas. The faces of both celestial bodies appear to be of a radically different nature, one incarnating glory and raw strength, while the other embodies calm and softness. They nonetheless both shine with the same light. The brilliance of both comes from a single source, the difference between them being only a mirage, a belief, product of our mind.

The day folds into the night, as the moon chases the sun in the sky. The argent orb's unveiling marks the passing of the month, while the pace of the days and the years is set by the course of the gilded star around which our planet revolves, forming the smallest of the heavenly wheels that we behold when our eyes are turned upward. Our life is also paced by these titanic circumambulations, and some members of our species are granted an existence lasting no longer than a veiling of the face of the moon, while others will not remember the number of solstices that they will have witnessed. In the same manner as the light of the two great luminaries hung in the firmament continuously shines, even when it is concealed from our eyes, the foundation of our being nonetheless remains forever unaffected. A day or a year, the distinction is of no importance outside of the vacuous debates occurring within the walls of man's world, as beyond these ramparts, there is no life or death, no length or intensity, but only the immutable essence that endures, the great light that remains constant, even when the sky continuously displays a formidable parade of continuously changing characters skillfully playing with light and shadows, vivid colors and elaborate decorations. The one who has seen the light sees his own face while looking at the bright countenance of our star, as he beholds his own self while contemplating the gleam of the ashen sphere shining through the night.[43] Approaching the end of his days, he knows that his face will remain unchanged after his passing. It will forever remain on display for all eyes to see, above the highest clouds, and in the depths of a lake. In a cup of water or at the zenith in the sky, it will still brightly shine, chasing away all shadows and all apprehensions.

[43]See: 神保如天. 《従容録通解》。東京：無我山房, 1915. Page 276 (Case 36).

Case 52 —You Are Huichao —汝是慧超

Source: The Blue Cliff Record Case 7.

【中】

jǔ sēng wèn fǎ yǎn huì chāo zī hé shàng rú hé shì fó
舉。僧問法眼：「慧超咨[1]和尚，如何是佛。」
fǎ yǎn yún rǔ shì huì chāo
法眼云：「汝是慧超。」

[1] 【咨】[zī]: "to consult."

【日】

こ そう ほうげん と えちょう おしょう と
舉す。僧、法眼に問う、「慧超、和尚に咨う、
いか こ ぶつ ほうげんいわ なんじ こ えちょう
如何なるか是れ佛。」法眼云く、「汝は是れ慧超。」

【E】

A monk asked Fayan: "Huichao wants to ask you, 'What is a Buddha?'" Fayan said, "You are Huichao."

We grope through the darkness, desperately searching for the ground of all things, stumbling on every obstacle, puzzled by our own helplessness and our lack of knowledge of what we so eagerly desire. Reaching for the hand of someone whose eyes are sufficiently sensitive to see the way clearly, illuminated by the faint gleam of the shimmering grey arms of our galaxy, we are finally offered precious guidance, with the simplest of words: "What you seek, what you need, is to know yourself!" The seeker is a pilgrim passing through a steep and narrow valley, shouting at the top of his lungs, stirring up an invisible wave in the air with a resounding question: "Who am I?" The earth itself then answers, reflecting this wave back at its source, echoing repeatedly in his ears: "Who am I?" ... "Who am I?" ...[44] The question itself is its own answer.

[44] See: Villalba, Dokusho. *Hekiganroku. Crónicas del Acantilado Azul.* Miraguano Ediciones. 1994. Page 39: "Buscas al Buddha y descubres que no hay Buddha alguno. Entonces te hallas solo tú mismo. Tu experiencia es tu realilad. Si no reconoces el Buddha que eres tú, nunca podrás encontrar ningún Buddha. ...Te sitúas en la cumbre de la montaña y gritas al valle: "¿Quién soy yo. E va e te responde: ¿uien soy yo . ... ¿ quién soy yo . ... ¿quién soy yo?" Pero tú no comprendes su respuesta, y continúas preguntando: "¿quién soy yo?". La respuesta del valle es: tú eres la pregunta quién soy yo."

The inquirer is himself what is sought. It is not to be found in front of him, as an object observed by a subject. It is not to be found within himself, as a subject facing a world of objects. The name he has been given at birth designates the essential nature of all that is, and so do the names of all the things and people surrounding him. Finally equipped with such an awareness, every step he takes is then taken on hallowed ground, and every utterance he makes is a divine name. We, likewise, simply need to turn our gaze away from the alluring lights of the world, the deceitful illusions of the mind, and then our eyes will progressively grow accustomed to the dark. Everything will then slowly appear in a new light, one that is not kindled by the hands of our brethren, but rather pervades the entirety of the skies, with us then taking a glance at the true extent of our self, the infinite reach of our nature.

Case 53 —Picking from Inside, Pecking from Outside —學人啐請師啄

Source: The Blue Cliff Record Case 16.

【中】

jǔ sēng wèn jìng qīng xué rén cuì qǐng shī zhuó qīng
舉。僧問鏡清：「學人啐，[1] 請師啄。」[2] 清
yún huán dé huó yě wú sēng yún ruò bù huó zāo rén guài xiào
云：「還得活也無。」僧 云：「若不活，遭人怪笑。」
qīng yún yě shì cǎo lǐ hàn
清 云：「也是草裏漢。」

[1] 【啐】[cuì]: An onomatopoeia that can mean “to spit” or “to sip,” but here expresses the idea of an unborn chick picking his shell from the inside.

[2] 【啄】[zhuó]: “to peck.” In this case, the hen pecks the outside of a shell to free the chick inside it.

【日】

こ そう きょうせい と がくにんそつ こ し
舉す。僧、鏡清に問う、「學人啐す、請う師
たく しょういわ は い え や そう
啄せよ。」清云く、「還た活くるを得る也無。」僧
いわ も い ひと あざわら しょう
云く、「若し活きずんば、人に怪笑われん。」清
いわ ま こ そうり かん
云く、「也た是れ草裏の漢。」

【E】

A monk asked Jingqing: "This student is picking from inside the shell. Please, teacher, peck from outside!" Jingqing said, "Will he still be alive or not?" The monk said, "If he were not alive, one would become a laughingstock." Jingqing said, "This fellow is still stuck in the weeds![1] "

[1] "The weeds": The weeds often symbolize the illusions of the world and attachments.

Generation after generation, people have been puzzled by the question of what comes first: the chicken or the egg? Only the one who fails to see that they are one is perplexed by this. Life sprouts from life, in a continuous chain, from a time when there were neither chicks nor eggs, up to the very first spark of life, itself born out of the mysterious union of earth and life, water and thunder. Having been meticulously selected by the ruthlessness of nature, the chick instinctively picks the inside of its fragile shell, yearning for freedom from its earthly enclosure, separating it from the world. Such picking still only comes when the bird is sufficiently mature to resist the unforgiving harshness of the heavens and the earth. If the parent carelessly pecks the shell from the outside, not knowing the condition of the chick, it may occur too soon and threaten the life of the newborn. Inside or outside the shell, the creatures yet do not ponder the appropriateness of their actions. They do not think, but rather only let themselves be guided by their own nature, which knows best, as the creatures that were poorly guided by their instincts perished, without leaving offspring. Forcing an early birth will only cause a premature death.

The young desperately wants to live, discovering everything the world has to offer, without realizing that this world is but another shell, an enclosure made of things that conceal the earth and the sky found beyond it, but unlike the chick that is naturally eager to break its shell, the inhabitants of the realm of the living often spend the entirety of their decades-long existence without perceiving the presence of the pen enclosing them. Only at the time of their death will they return to the great earth, under the majestic sky, once again one with the whole of being. As long as there is an inside and an outside, someone who picks from the outside and someone who pecks from the inside, the truth is veiled, obscured by the light of the world. Guided by the vicissitudes of fate or someone who came back from the dead, one may, all the same, break out the greater shell, causing the high rampart bordering the world to collapse, letting himself be crushed by its building blocks, impaled by the gigantic beak. Then will both life and death suddenly vanish into thin air. Neither living nor dead, the one who ventures out of the greater

shell is dead to the world, but finally born onto the bare earth. He no longer hears the advice of the living and is blind to the guidance of the elders. Eggs and chickens are no more. There are no parents or children. No matter whether they were eloquent or crude, the words of the world have equally faded into silence, and all that can be heard is the deafening laughter of those who are neither living nor dead, the tall trees that have been stripped of all their leaves before winter, appearing withered, already reclaimed by the earth, but the spring breeze now slips between their branches, and timidly, emerald buds emerge from the tip of their extended arms, a sign that life and death are one, only two faces of the same coin rotating endlessly in the air. Watching this scenery from the lowly grasses, the immature only sees the majesty of the tree, not realizing that he shares the same root with it. He himself is born out of the great body of the earth rather than out of the world. His life is a mere illusion, and his death a mirage. Once both sides have been experienced, then can the truth gloriously shine, and he can then see beyond life and death, inside and outside, child and parent.

Case 54 —Daisui's Kalpa Fire —大隋劫火

Source: The Blue Cliff Record Case 29.

A longer and slightly different version of the case can be found in Book of Serenity, case 30.[45] The version from the Blue Cliff Record has nonetheless been preferred here.

【中】

jǔ sēng wèn dà suí jié huǒ dòng rán dà qiān jù huài
舉。僧問大隋：「劫火[1] 洞然，[2] 大千[3] 俱壞，
wèi shěn zhè gè huài bú huài suí yún huài sēng yún rèn me
未審這箇壞不壞。」隋 云：「壞。」僧 云：「恁麼
zé suí tā qù yě suí yún suí tā qù
則隨他去也。」隋 云：「隨他去。」

[1] 【劫火】 [jié huǒ]: "the Kalpa-Fire." A great fire marking the end of the "kalpa of destruction" (壞劫), one of the four eons in Indian mythology.

[2] 【洞然】 [dòng rán]: "to burn [with fire]."

[3] 【大千】 [dà qiān]: Abbreviation of 大千世界 , the "thousand great worlds."

【日】

[45] See Book of Serenity, case 30: 舉。僧問大隨。劫火洞然大。千俱壞。未審這箇壞不壞隨云。壞僧云。恁麼則隨他去也隨云。隨他去僧問龍濟。劫火洞然大千俱壞。未審這箇壞不壞濟云。不壞僧云。為甚不壞濟云。為同大千。

舉す。僧大隋に問う、「劫火洞然として、大千俱に壞す。未審、這箇は壞するか壞せざるか。」隋云く、「壞す。」僧云く、「恁麼ならば則ち他に隨い去かん。」隋云く、「他に隨い去け。」

【E】

A monk asked Daisui: “When the Kalpa Fire is ignited, the thousand great [worlds] will be destroyed. I wonder whether ‘that’ will also be destroyed or not.” Daisui said, “Destroyed.” The monk said, “In that case, will ‘that’ be gone with the other?” Daisui said, “Gone with the other.”

At first folded onto itself, the sky then suddenly deployed its wings, marking the birth of our universe, continuing to extend its reach as swiftly as the light it contains runs to its edges, opening up a space within which all things may be, long before there were any eyes to witness this stupendous event. One day, these heavenly wings may perhaps once again be folded upon themselves, with the sky contracted at great speed, space itself compressed into a fiery sphere of light and earth, until it reaches the size of the smallest speck of dust. Then will the world of men ineluctably collapse. Then will the last traces of the earth itself be erased, turned into pure brilliance. The very essence of our flesh will, without a doubt, still be part of this glorious catastrophe. We were woven of stardust and light, and our substance will survive the world, life, and the earth itself. Our bodies are made of what once was a blazing speck of matter that later became the seemingly infinite skies, and we should forever remain, even when the heavenly wings flutter continuously through the ages, with myriads of cyclic movements of extension and folding.

When man’s world is inevitably destroyed by the folding of the heavens or their tearing apart, the very notion of “destruction” will itself have been annihilated, as it exists only within the confines of his mind. The skies may be extended and folded. The earth may be kneaded back into pure light before it once again assumes its form as a sphere of incandescent dust in which a tree of life takes its roots, but nothing is created, and nothing disappears. The whole of nature continues its eternal dance, with the potential cyclic folding of the heavens simply

being the greatest of the heavenly wheels, perpetually in motion, the beating heart of being. The underlying nature of the skies remains as immutable as it is inscrutable, and thus the essence of all that is, including ourselves, endures.

What would irremediably be crushed with the collapse of the world, when the memories of the last man vanish into oblivion, would be the difference between things. Every instance of "this" will then be forgotten, while any occurrence of "that" will fade away. No-thing will remain, and everything will be gone with "it." The air will no longer be soiled by the utterances of such vulgar words. There will be no one to vainly ask what "this" and "that" are, as there will be no thing, only being itself, invariably enduring, passing unscathed through the most raging fire, slipping through the tiniest hole, indestructible but perfectly malleable, assuming every possible form, without any form being distinguishable. If you think that it means "it" will remain intact, you are nonetheless mistaken. "It" will be swept away completely, and nothing will remain of "it." It is completely destroyed in the eyes of man, but perfectly intact when seen without the eyes, when perceived beyond the frontiers of the world. This is what we are, our face before we were born, before the heavens were opened, before there was any space where one could be, and before the flow of time was set in motion.

Case 55 —Huiji —That Is Me! —惠寂是我

Source: The Blue Cliff Record Case 68.

【中】

jǔ yǎng shān wèn sān shèng rǔ míng shén me shèng yún huì jì
舉。仰山問三聖:「汝名什麼。」聖云:「惠寂
yǎng shān yún huì jì shì wǒ shèng yún wǒ
[1]。」仰山云:「惠寂是我。」聖云:「我
míng huì rán yǎng shān hē hē dà xiào
名惠然[2]。」仰山呵呵大笑。

[1] The full name of Yangshan is 仰山惠寂 [yǎng shān huì jì].

[2] The full name of Sansheng is 三聖慧然 [sān shèng huì rán].

【日】

こ ぎょうさん さんしょう と なんじ な なん
舉す。仰山、三聖に問う、「汝の名は什麼ぞ。」
しょういわ えじゃく きょうざんいわ えじゃく こ われ
聖云く、「慧寂。」仰山云く、「慧寂は是れ我なり。」

しょういわ　わ　な　えねん　きょうざん　かかたいしょう
聖云く、「我が名は慧然。」仰山、呵呵大笑す。

【E】

Yangshan asked Sansheng: "What is your name?" Sansheng said, "Huiji."[1] Yangshan said, "Huiji —that's me!" Sansheng said, "My name is Huiran."[2] Yangshan laughed loudly.

[1] The full name of Yangshan is 仰山惠寂 [yǎng shān huì jì].

[2] The full name of Sansheng is 三聖慧然 [sān shèng huì rán].

Trying to know ourselves certainly should be one of the major undertakings of our lives. What defines who we are? To find an answer to this question, some will turn toward the earth, stooping upon still waters to contemplate their face, the most visible part of their body, and whose features mark their individuality, differentiating them from the countless other men roaming the face of the earth. Others will unseal their mouth and expels the air filling their chest, swiftly moving their tongue and their lips to produce a sound that represents them within their world: their name, resonating throughout the air, falling into the ears of those facing them, invoking their presence within the mind of the other. Not completely unique but shared by sufficiently few individuals to avoid permanent ambiguity, this name is our property, but we likewise belong to it. When this name is dragged into the mud, we feel degraded in our hearts. When it is exalted above all others within our world, we are emboldened, standing proudly in our flesh, with goosebumps on our skin induced by exultation.

Names are nonetheless mere arbitrary signs, and a rose's fragrance would not change even if it was known by any other name. Likewise, a whim of fate may have led us to bear another appellation, without seeing the essence of our being profoundly modified by it. More than this, it very well may be that, likewise, our very self would be as arbitrary as our name, equally a mere product of our world, rather than an inherent aspect of nature itself. We are all figurines of flesh, lumps of earth bewitched by the fire of life, but the frontier between us on the one hand, and the rest of the earth and the sky on the other, is only defined by our minds. It is a thing of our world rather than an objective piece of the earth. The whole of life, the whole of the earth, and the whole of being may also be seen as a totality, without being decomposed into

a series of elements. When all the myriads of things of the world have collapsed into one, then is this thing a faithful representation of being itself, of nature, with as little arbitrariness as the mind allows, as the very concept of "thing" does not exist outside of it.

When the truth of being is itself perceived in its totality, following the collapse of man's world, then every name is a word of truth, every utterance an invocation of the whole of being. Then, the barrier between the self and the other falls, as now, the only manifestation shining throughout the world is the essence pervading the entire earth and sky. Every face then becomes a pristine mirror. One's true nature is displayed in the celestial vault as well as in the waters coating the skin of our planet. We call ourselves out using the name of our neighbor, and we naturally turn our heads when hearing strange names thrown into the air. When those dwelling in this land, where only a single thing may be found and every name points at this thing, encounter each other, names resound like an echo in a vast and empty cave, located deep into the belly of the earth. Every name is then blended with others, forming a single wave going back and forth throughout the air, with every man hearing himself being called out, but knowing that there is no one to be called out, and all that can be heard is a deafening laughter, breaking the walls of the cave, soon causing the collapse of the last thing, marking the advent of the age of no-thing-ness.

Case 56 —The Monk Shooting the Great Stag —僧問射麈

Source: The Blue Cliff Record Case 81.

【中】

jǔ sēng wèn yào shān píng tián qiǎn cǎo zhǔ lù chéng qún rú hé
舉。僧問藥山：「平田淺草，麈[1] 鹿成群。如何
shè dé zhǔ zhōng zhǔ shān yún kàn jiàn sēng fàng shēn biàn dǎo shān
射得麈中麈。」山云：「看箭。」僧放身便倒。山
yún shì zhě tuō chū zhè sī hàn sēng biàn zǒu shān yún nòng
云：「侍者拕[2] 出這死漢。」僧便走。山云：「弄
ní tuán hàn yǒu shén me xiàn xuě dòu niān yún sān bù suī huó wǔ
泥團漢，有什麼限。」雪竇拈云：「三步雖活，五
bù xū sī zhǔ dèng qū
步須死。」麈瞪呿[3]

[1] 【麈】[zhǔ]: a kind of large deer. In all likelihood, the so-called "Père David's deer," native to China.

[2] 【拕】 S:【拖】 [tuō]: "to drag."

[3] The meaning of this use of the three characters is open to interpretation. They may describe the "steps" mentioned in the case. See also the same type of use in the 169th case (Blue Cliff Record 88), in which two of the three characters are identical; 瞪 [dèng]: "to open (one's eyes) wide" / "to stare at"; 呿 [qū]: "to yawn" / "to remain with one's mouth open."

【日】

舉す。僧、藥山に問う、「平田淺草に、麈と鹿と群を成す。如何か麈中の麈を射得ん。」山云く、「箭を看よ。」僧、身を放って便ち倒る。山云く、「這の死漢を拕出せ。」僧、便ち走す。山云く、「泥團を弄する漢、什麼の限りか有らん。」雪竇拈げて云く、「三歩は活すと雖も、五歩は須らく死すべし。」

【E】

A monk asked Yaoshan: "On the grassy plain, the great stag and the other deer form a herd. How may one shoot the greatest stag among the great stags?" Yaoshan said, "Look! An arrow!" The monk threw himself on the floor. Yaoshan said, "Attendant! Carry this dead fellow out of here." The monk then left. Yaoshan said, "How long will this fellow continue making mud balls?" (Xuedou mentioned this story and said, "Even though he was alive for three steps, he certainly died with the fifth step.") [1]

[1] See note 3 of the Chinese text about the three characters.

During the springtime, the verdant forest forms a thick, leafy garment enshrouding the earth, providing cover to the frightened beasts carefully avoiding the eyes of the hunter, fleeing from the attention and the sharpened arrows of the running intruders eager to wear their skin and feast upon their flesh. The great stag is the king of these creatures of the forest, but also the one that remains in the deepest, most concealed

parts of the woodlands, the hardest to spot with the eyes and to take down with pointy projectiles of steel. When the members of the herd are forced to venture out of their wooden shelter and enter into the grassy plains, exposed to the bloodthirsty eyes of the hunter, the great stag is protected by the rest of the deer, and these deer are themselves protected by the great stag. They indeed form a single creature, ready to take on those who intend to take their life away.

The hunter thus lays a trap to catch his prey before he even has the chance to see it, but the old beasts are not so easily caught. They recognize the difference between a noose and the withered leaves, and they notice the arrowhead's glare before it is shot. This is precisely why they reached such an old age. Wanting so ardently to butcher the prey, the deerstalker is blind to the peculiar scenery in front of him. So possessed by his sanguinary desire, he fails to see that he himself is prey, that may be voraciously devoured by others. He is the great stag chasing after its own shadow, completely blind to the situation he is thrown into. When the string he pulled with his fingers is released, the arrow flies forward at great speed, with its metallic tip ready to pierce the skin and go through the heart of its target. It is at this instant that the clouds are cleared from the air covering the plain, and that the azure firmament appears, with torrents of light suddenly flooding the land, brightly shining upon the sharpened weapon flying through the air, revealing its trajectory. It gets closer and closer, aimed at the hunter himself, and before he even grasps what is occurring, he is hit straight in his eye. With the resulting blindness, despite this fact, comes a revelation: the hardest creature to spot, and the trickiest to vanquish, is the self.

The lifeblood of the hunter is spilled abundantly over the ground. The life of the prey is fading away as the beast falls in the grass. But even pierced with a sharp blade, the eye is now wide open. Passing through death, one gains life.[46] When the great stag is no more, the herd promptly scatters through the plains, and all that remains is the deserted landscape, the endless expanse of the emerald earth under the clear sapphire sky, without any thing standing out, only a seamlessly changing scenery, as the days fold into nights and the seasons succeed to one another, without any eye observing the grand marvel that is nature.

Inept hunters, however, continue to roam the vast plains. They impatiently shoot their arrows with poor aim, without ever hitting their target, and thus never realize what they are. They play their game, not seeing that they are the game that is being chased, the ones who are being played. They claim to have made a kill, boasting of their successes to the elders, who are, despite this fact, not so easily duped,

[46] A "Zen-phrase": 「死中得活」"Gaining life through death."

and these experienced men simply shake their heads, disappointed in their descendants, seeing how far these children remain from maturity to lead a new generation. But the time will come. The living will one day die, and the dead will rise up, born anew onto the earth, ready to kill, prepared to save, no longer seeing either hunter or prey, the self or the other.

Case 57 —Xiyuan's Two Wrong —連下兩錯

Source: The Blue Cliff Record Case 98.

【中】

jǔ tiān píng hé shàng xíng jiǎo shí cān xī yuàn cháng yún mò dào
舉。天平和尚行脚時參西院，常云：「莫道
huì fó fǎ mì gè jǔ huà rén yě wú yí rì xī yuàn yáo jiàn zhào
會佛法，覓箇舉話人也無。」一日西院遙見[1] 召[2]
yún cóng yī píng jǔ tóu xī yuàn yún cuò píng
云：「從漪。」平舉頭，西院云：「錯。」平
xíng sān liǎng bù xī yuàn yòu yún cuò píng jìn qián xī yuàn
行三兩步，西院又云：「錯。」平近前。西院
yún shì lái zhè liǎng cuò shì xī yuàn cuò shì shàng zuò cuò
云：「適來[3] 這兩錯，是西院錯，是上座錯。」
píng yún cóng yī cuò xī yuàn yún cuò píng xiū
平云：「從漪錯。」西院云：「錯。」平休
qù xī yuàn yún qiě zài zhè lǐ guò xià dài gòng shàng zuò shāng liáng zhè
去，西院云：「且在這裏過夏，待共上座商量這
liǎng cuò píng dāng shí biàn xíng hòu zhù yuàn wèi zhòng yún wǒ dāng
兩『錯』。」平當時便行。後住院，謂眾云：「我當
chū xíng jiǎo shí bèi yè fēng chuī dào sī míng zhǎng lǎo chù lián xià liǎng cuò
初行脚時，被業風吹到思明長老處。連下兩錯，
gèng liú wǒ guò xià dài gòng wǒ shāng liáng wǒ bú dào rèn me shí cuò wǒ fā
更留我過夏，待共我商量。我不道恁麼時錯，我發
zú xiàng nán fāng qù shí zǎo zhī dào cuò liǎo yě yī
足向南方去時，早知道錯了也漪。」

[1] 【遙見】 S:【遥见】 [yáo jiàn]: "to see from afar."

[2] 【召】 [zhào]: "to call together" / "to summon."

[3] 【適來】【适来】 [shì lái]: Equivalent to the modern Chinese: 剛才, used to point out the fact that something just happened.

【日】

こ てんぴょうおしょうあんぎゃ とき さいいん さん
舉す。天平和尚行脚しおりし時、西院に參ず。

常に云く、「佛法を會するは莫道、箇の擧話の人を覓むるも也た無しと。」一日、西院遥かに見て召して云く、「從漪。」平、頭を擧ぐ。西院云く、「錯。」平、行くこと三兩歩す。西院又た云く、「錯。」平、近前る。西院云く、「適來の這の兩錯、是れ西院の錯か、是れ上座の錯か。」平云く、「從漪の錯なり。」西院云く、「錯。」平、休去る。西院云く、「且は這裏に在いて夏を過せ。待に上座と這の兩錯を商量せんと。」平、當時ち便ち行く。後に住院して、衆に謂って云く、「我當初、行脚しおりし時、業風に吹かれて、思明長老の處に到るや、連けざまに兩錯を下して、更に我を留めて夏を過し、待に我と商量せんとせらる。我恁麼の時は錯と道わざりしも、我南方に發足し去りし時には、早に錯なることを知道り了れりと。」

【E】

Master Tianping was on a pilgrimage and visited Xiyuan, who was always saying: “Don’t say you understand Buddhism. I have sought someone able to talk about it, but haven’t found any.” One day, Xiyuan saw him from afar and called him: “Congyi!”[1] Tianping raised his head. Xiyuan said, “Wrong!” Tianping went on a few steps. Xiyuan once again said, “Wrong!” Tianping came before him. Xiyuan said, “These two ‘wrong’ I just said, do they mean that Xiyuan is wrong, or that it is the chief monk who is wrong?” Tianping said, “Congyi is wrong.” Xiyuan said, “Wrong!” Tianping remained silent. Xiyuan said, “But stay here for the summer [retreat]!

The chief monk will examine these two 'wrong' with you." Tianping nonetheless departed immediately. Later, once he became abbot of his own temple, he said to his assembly: "As I was on a pilgrimage, I was driven by the wind of fate and came to Elder Siming,[2] who twice told me: 'wrong!', and furthermore, demanded that I stay for the summer to discuss this matter with him. I did not acknowledge where I was wrong at the time, but when I was on my way down south, I quickly realized how wrong I was."

———

The inexperienced young man seeks understanding by wandering far from his homeland, peregrinating to encounter strange landscapes, being inevitably brought face to face with the unintelligible, being forced to encounter the most unfamiliar, in the hope of unearthing the secrets of his existence, of solving the puzzle of the meaning of his life. The pilgrim is chasing after a rainbow, an image of wonder that surpasses all that can be found around the place where he was born. He deciphers the strange words of the foreigner, thinking that there lies the wisdom that has been denied to him from his infancy, and thus waits for the words dispensed by the mountain hermit, like someone lost in the desert, his mouth cracked by thirst, begging for relief and his life.

When one is convinced he has found what he sought, it flees away. When he feels he has understood, he is immediately proven wrong. The man of the way recognizes the pilgrim from afar and does not need to see his face to know his name. Calling him out, he knows instantly if this one knows who he is, or not. The wanderer raises his head when hearing the name he has been given at birth, the word invoking his presence within their common world. Thus is his ignorance displayed under the heavens, his innocence broadcast throughout the air, witnessed by all creatures of the mountain. A terrifying shout then loudly resounds throughout the valley and in the ears of the stunned visitor: "Wrong!" Puzzled by what seems like a rebuke, as he had yet to approach the host, he continues a few steps before once again hearing the same roar of admonition.

When hearing words of disapproval echoing through our ears, we will tend to consider ourselves the object of such condemnation, even when their target is not explicitly mentioned. The pilgrim, failing to understand what wrong he has committed, will still easily confess that it is he who has transgressed, submitting himself to the authority of his host, thinking that he will appreciate this gesture of goodwill. The wise of the way, however, sees through appearances, and once again, the same roar of reproach resounds in the air. Too naïve to understand, too proud

to seek to know, the elder is simply dismissed as a joker or a madman, and the pilgrim is convinced that the truth he seeks is nowhere to be found on this peak. He thus continues his journey on his path.

Arduous it is for a man of the way to encounter someone seeing the same path. He is constantly surrounded by throngs of people standing on it with him, but they fail to see where they are. Captives of the world, slaves to their own selves, they have yet to encounter their own nature, to see their own true face, what remains when the mask and disguise of the world have fallen to the ground. When one sees it, he dies of shock, crumbling to ashes, then swiftly carried by the winds, scattered beyond the ramparts of the great citadel, floating throughout the desolate wasteland. But then his life begins anew. Then does he finally know his true name, the only one to which he will from now on answer. One day, the pilgrim will realize that the opposition between right and wrong, the self and the other, is only a sign of his deception, a product of the mind, a thing of the world. Neither he nor the elder was wrong, and neither were they right. To examine the "wrong" is to attempt to seize a rainbow and see that it is only an image in our eyes. Where no one is, no one is right or wrong. Where there is no right or wrong, there can the truth shine in its integrity, without being stained by man's fingers, like a block of jade extended to the end of the earth, without any scratch, without any dent, without any name.

Case 58 —Yangshan Thrusts His Hoe into the Ground —仰山插鍬

Source: The Book of Serenity Case 15.

【中】

jǔ guī shān wèn yǎng shān shén chù lái yǎng yún tián zhōng lái shān yún tián zhōng duō shǎo rén yǎng chā xià qiāo zi chā shǒu ér lì shān yún nán shān dà yǒu rén yì máo yǎng niān qiāo zi biàn xíng

舉。 溈山 問 仰山：「甚處來。」 仰 云：「田中來。」 山 云：「田中多少人。」 仰 插下鍬子，[1] 叉手[2] 而立。 山 云：「南山大有人刈[3] 茆。」[4] 仰 拈鍬子便行。

[1] 【鍬】 S:【锹】 [qiāo]: "a hoe."

[2] 【叉手】 [chā shǒu]: "to clasp one's hands together in front of one's chest" (as a mark of respect).

[3] 【刈】 [yì]: "to mow."

[4] 【茆】 [mǎo]: variant of 茅 [máo], a type of water plant, thatch, or Cogon grass.

【日】

舉す。潙山、仰山に問う、「甚麼の處より來る。」仰云く、「田中より來る。」山云く、「田中多少の人ぞ。」仰、鍬子を挿下して叉手して立つ。山云く、「南山大いに人有って茆を刈る。」仰、鍬子を拈じて便ち行く。

【E】

Guishan asked Yangshan: “Where have you come from?” Yangshan said, “From the field.” Guishan said, “How many people are there in the field?” Yangshan thrust his hoe into the ground and stood with his hands clasped in front of his chest.[1] Guishan said, “There are a great number of people cutting thatch on the South Mountain.” Yangshan took up his hoe and left immediately.

[1] See note 2 of the Chinese text.

When two mountains face each other, one casts its shadow upon the other in the morning, while the other will reciprocate in the evening. When two men of the way encounter each other, they playfully throw words at each other, sharpened like spears, attempting to cause the other to retreat and trip down and fall to the ground, without fear of any wound, as they are already dead, skeletons having risen from the mud. They perfectly know whence they came, the great body of the earth from which most of the world itself is formed. The walker of the way stands upon the bare ground, his toes covered in dust. He cherishes the soil more than the riches of the capital. He lives in close contact with the essence, paying no attention to the vacuous illusions of men. His two feet firmly anchored in the freshly tilled ground, proudly standing, his entire body pointing to the highest heaven, he stands on the tip of a gigantic pole, far above the cities, towering over the creations of men. Above and below the heavens, he alone is honored.[47] He is the great mountain

[47]See: 神保如天. 《従容録通解》。東京：無我山房, 1915. Page 123 (Case 15): 「叉手して立った、天上天下唯我獨尊の様子，然し是れは亦向上の死漢たるにあらず。」

whose base encompasses the entire earth, the only thing that remains when all other things have been discarded. Nothing can be discerned from such lofty heights. No one is recognized from the summit of the earth. Everything is seen clearly, but nothing is identified, and one only enjoys the harmonious blending, the magnificence of the skies towering over the land.

Alone on the summit, the enlightened hermit's existence is serene. Content with having nothing, but overlooking everything, his life nonetheless exhibits a lack of compassion. He has finally found contentment and liberation by fleeing from the illusory world of men, taking refuge in the sober truth of no-thing-ness, having even let himself be entirely dispossessed of his individuality, but he thereby also abandoned those still prisoners of this cruel world, left behind those desperately looking for the way out of the cluttered and disorderly citadel of things, relief from the yoke overburdening their shoulders. The tallest sequoia pays no attention to the grass at its feet. Likewise, the desert hermit is safe from the weapons of men and the wrath of the sky, but the men of the world are being trampled by the soles of the ruthless, cut down and thrown into the fire for the benefit of the few.

Even the tallest mountain is nonetheless one day eroded by the rain and another then towers over it. The solitary hermit ineluctably stumbles upon another man of the way, even when he has fled to the end of the earth. The lofty is then humbled. The one who thought that he was no one, having abandoned his own self, will be once again invited to become someone, and to assume his role in the great play of the world, as a liberator, freeing the slaves of the world, breaking their chains with his staff and his hands, slashing the sturdy ropes binding them to the walls around them. And when the city will only be populated by free men, those who have seen it from the unfathomable height of the summit of the great mountain, then the mountain will become one with the city. Its walls will fall, and a great landslide will bring the mountain into its streets. The hermit will feel at home in the palace, and the king will retreat into a cliffside cave. Without attachment to either the world or no-thing-ness, without cherishing the city or the mountain, there will only be playful dances and chants, long days of silent contemplation, and fraternal fellowship. Seeing oneself in everything, seeing no-thing-ness in oneself, the poisons of the past will be diluted in the immensity of the ocean of compassion, and each blade of grass will have time to grow into a majestic tree.

Case 59 —Yunyan Sweeps the Ground —
雲巖掃地

Source: The Book of Serenity Case 21.

【中】

jǔ yún yán sǎo dì cì dào wú yún tài qū qū shēng
舉。雲巖掃地次道吾云：「太區區[1] 生。」
yán yún xū zhī yǒu bù qū qū zhě wú yún rèn me zé yǒu
巖云：「須知有不區區者。」吾云：「恁麼則有
dì èr yuè yě yán tí qǐ sào zhǒu yún zhè gè shì dì jǐ yuè
第二月也。」巖提起掃箒[2] 云：「這箇是第幾月。」
wú biàn xiū qù xuán shā yún zhèng shì dì èr yuè yún mén
吾便休去。玄沙云：「正是第二月。」雲門
yún nú jiàn bì yīn qín
云：「奴見婢殷勤。」[3]

[1] 【區區】 S:【区区】 [qū qū]: “small” / “trivial.”

[2] 【箒】 S:【帚】 [zhǒu]: “a broom.”

[3] 【殷勤】 [yīn qín]: “[to do something] politely” / “[to do something] solicitously.”

【日】

こ うんがんそうち つい どうごいわ たいくくせい
舉す。雲巖掃地の次で、道吾云く、「太區區生。」
がんいわ すべかし くく もの
巖云く、「須らく知るべし、區區たらざる者ある
ごいわ いんも すなわだいにげつ
ことを。」吾云く、「恁麼ならば則ち第二月あり
がん そうそう ていき いわ しゃこ こ だいいく
や。」巖、掃箒を提起して云く、「這箇は是れ第幾
げつ ごすなわきゅうさ げんしゃいわ まさこだい
月ぞ。」吾便ち休し去る。玄沙云く、「正に是れ第
にげつ うんもんいわ ぬひみいんごん
二月。」雲門云く、「奴は婢を見て殷勤。」

【E】

When Yunyan was sweeping the ground, Daowu said, “How fussy you are!” Yunyan said, “You should know that there is someone who is not fussy!” Daowu said, “If that’s so, that would mean there is a second moon!” Yunyan held up his broom and said, “What number of moons is this?” Daowu

remained silent. Xuansha said, “That is precisely the second moon.” Yunmen said, “The servant greets the maid politely.”

A duel between friends may be fiercer than one between foes, but when one has forgotten which is which, and nobody knows where the weapons are striking, death is in the air, and no one will be left standing.

The dwellers of no-thing-ness, those who have thrown away their own self like a worn-out garment, see themselves in the eyes of everyone, as there is only one thing in their lives, the pale moon that softly illuminates all that is, appearing in each puddle of water, each cup, each lake, as ten thousand celestial bodies, whereas they are all images of a single source, its multiplicity being only an insidious illusion. Playing with these reflections, the experienced practitioner sometimes disguises himself, picking up rags on the ground to cover his nakedness, to pretend to once again be a man of the world, an individual facing others, bold and proud. He may then start a game, teasing his companions. All around him, men are tirelessly exhausting their strength so that their world would pierce through higher clouds, creating things, with some industriously sweeping away the dust covering the ground, meticulously separating the world, clean and spotless, from the earth, covered in mud and sand, disorderly and untamed. Seeing through the vanity of their intentions, beholding the vacuity of their prodigious efforts to polish the earth and veil it with objects made of the same earth, the player jokingly points out the tiring nature of these activities, deriding them while deliberately refraining from offering a helping hand. He cunningly lays a trap. He vigorously casts a wide net, ready to become a fisher of men, and one fish soon jumps into it, opening its mouth wide, ready to swallow a bait whole, or at least so it appears. It may seem that one is exhausting himself, but another is not! One does something while another watches, but who is who? To see more than one thing is to be a prisoner of the world, to fail to see the oneness of all that is. It is to contemplate a thousand reflections of the moon in bodies of water, while failing to recognize the unicity of their source. To assert that one is working while another is not is to see two moons, that is, to be caught in the realm of illusions and falsehood.

The workers of the world may nevertheless also be dwellers of no-thing-ness. They may know the game initiated by the player and be apt to take the lead and skillfully choose the next move. The sweeper may take his broom and vigorously strike the ground with it, standing erect, confidently asking: “What number of moons is this?!” The one counting the moons in the water may be the one who is deluded about their source, and the one merely pointing them out may be very well aware of their

illusory nature. What number of moons is this? He is alone. He is the moon itself, revolving around the axis of the broom, gloriously glowing throughout the world, his face displayed and seen on any surface of water. The game has now been played. The duel leaves no one standing, and all that remains is the silence of the night and the delicate figure of the ashy luminary, whose image is sprinkled throughout the world of men. The players are no more. There is no winner or vanquished, no right nor wrong. The moon itself is soon veiled by the light of dawn. Its gentle glow is erased with a brush of gilded light, and then nothing remains of this springtime dream.

Case 60 —Guishan's Karmic Consciousness —溈山業識

Source: The Book of Serenity Case 37.

【中】

jǔ guī shān wèn yǎng shān hū yǒu rén wèn yí qiè zhòngshēng dàn
舉。溈山 問 仰山：「忽有人問：『一切眾生但
yǒu yè shí máng máng wú běn kě jù zī zuò me shēng yàn yǎng
有業識[1] 茫茫，[2] 無本可據。』，子作麼生驗。」仰
yún ruò yǒu sēng lái jí zhào yún mǒu jiǎ sēng huí shǒu nǎi yún shì
云：「若有僧來即召云：『某甲。』，僧迴首乃云：『是
shén me dài yī nī yì xiàng dào fēi wéi yè shí máng máng yì nǎi wú
甚麼。』，待伊擬議向道：『非唯業識茫茫。亦乃無
běn kě jù guī yún shàn zāi
本可據。』」溈 云：「善哉。」

[1] 【業識】 S:【业识】 [yè shí]: "karmic consciousness."

[2] 【茫茫】 [máng máng]: "vast and obscure."

【日】

こ いさん きょうざん と たちま ひと あ
舉す。溈山、仰山に問う、「忽ち人有りて
いっさいしゅじょうただ ごっし ぼうぼう もと よ な
一切衆生但業識茫茫として本の據るべき無きあ
と さもさん こころみ きょうわ も そう
りやと問わば作麼生か驗ん。」仰云く、「若し僧の
きた すなわ め い こ なん
來ることあらば即ち召して云わん、是れ甚麼ぞ
かれ ぎぎ ま むか い ただ
と。」彼が擬議せんを待って、向って云わん、唯

業識茫茫たるのみに非ず、亦乃ち本の據るべきなしと。潙云く、「善いかな。」

【E】

Guishan asked Yangshan: "Suppose a man says, 'All living beings are tossed in a vast and obscure karmic consciousness, and have no foundation to rely upon.' How would one check him?" Yangshan said, "If such a monk were to come, I would call out to him: 'Sir!' When he turns his head, one would immediately say: 'What is this?' One would then wait for him to be puzzled and then say to him: 'Not only is there a vast karmic consciousness, but also there is no foundation to rely upon.'" Guishan said, "Good."

Easy it is for someone to carry the wealth painstakingly earned by his parents during all their lives, but the possession of these riches does not imply that he has earned them. The ignorant may carelessly repeat the truths heard in a preaching hall while slumbering, but the knowledge of this truth does not equal its understanding. Gold is tried by fire, and man with words, questions that reveal whether what he carries indeed belongs to him.

Likewise, a child may joyfully run through the streets and proclaim that "no-thing-ness is the world; the world is no-thing-ness," but will his behavior reflect this knowledge of the nature of being? All beings are unknowingly thrown into a vast and obscure world, where all actions are seen through the prisms of right and wrong, merit and sin, beneficial or harmful.[48] Each thought that is raised by his mind is captive to this world, whose ground appears concealed from his view. To rest upon the separating line between right and wrong, merit and sin, is child's play. To the servant of the world, it appears as absolutely established, dependable. He just has to follow the right path, and he will be given his reward when death comes. This comfortable position is nonetheless only tenable when one does not investigate the nature of the ground, when one does not inquire of the solidity of the foundation of this world.

[48]See: Yamada, Kou'un, *Shôyôroku (Book of Equanimity)* [Unpublished manuscript]: "Recall the words in the Diamond Sutra: Dwelling nowhere, the mind should come forth. ... He is saying it is empty when he says there is nothing to rely on. It's the same as form is emptiness, emptiness is form."

Such an investigation would indeed reveal that this fortress is built upon quicksand. The cornerstone is turned, and all that is found is a bottomless chasm, a great abyss, where no-thing is found. We are thrown into a world, but there is no foundation to rely upon. No-thing-ness itself is its foundation.

Hearing the insightful proclamation, one may simply call out the one who has uttered it: “Sir!” And when this man reacts by turning his head, without thought, without reflection, or delay, one would thereby point out the very foundation of the world, that is, what is there where no thought emerges, the primordial impulse, the instinct tied together with the work of the senses, the edge between the world and the abyss. To react and answer is to be still a prisoner of one’s self and of the world, to rely upon them, uncontrollably, instinctively. Not answering would imply being dispossessed of one’s humanity, ceasing to be part of the world, the vanishing of the self, not relying upon anything, depending only on no-thing-ness, which cannot be relied on.

The living are tossed in a vast and obscure world, erected upon a great abyss. When one neither dwells in the world nor the abyss, never resting, never remaining still, knowing that only through non-abiding may one remain in harmony with the way, then is the proclamation uttered in truthfulness. To rest on sure ground is to be caught in an illusion. To hesitate is to be blind. When one is not afraid to march in the great chasm, or fears to stand for the “good” of the world, the two shores are then brought together. The foundation and the construction can no longer be distinguished from one another, with each one resting upon the other, finding a subtle and incomprehensible equilibrium.

Case 61 —Fayan’s by Boat or by Land —法眼舡陸

Source: The Book of Serenity Case 51.

【中】

jǔ fǎ yǎn wèn jué shàng zuò chuán lái lù lái jué
舉。法眼 問 覺 上座：「舡來，陸來。」覺
yún chuán lái yǎn yún chuán zài shén me chù jué yún chuán
云：「舡來。」眼 云：「舡在甚麼處。」覺 云：「舡
zài hé lǐ jué tuì hòu yǎn què wèn bàng sēng yún ěr dào shì
在河裏。」覺 退後，眼 却問傍僧云：「爾道適
lái zhè sēng jù yǎn bú jù yǎn
來[1] 這僧，具眼不具眼。」

[1] 【適來】[shì lái]: It expresses the fact that something just happened. Similar to the modern Chinese: 猶剛才 .

【日】

舉す。法眼、覺上座に問う、「舡來か陸來か。」覺云く、「舡來。」眼云く、「舡甚麼の處にか在る。」覺云く、「舡は河裏にあり。」覺退いて後、眼却って傍僧に問うて云く、「爾道え適來の這の僧眼を具するや眼を具せざるや。」

【E】

Fayan asked Senior Monk Jue: "Arrived[1] by boat or by land?" Jue said, "By boat." Fayan said, "Where is the boat?" Jue said, "The boat is on the river." After Jue had withdrawn, Fayan asked a monk next to him: "You tell me, the monk who was here just now, did he have the eye or not?"

[1] The question seems to be deliberately direct, avoiding the use of personal pronouns.

A wise man often appears as a fool, and even a well-trained eye will be incapable of ascertaining which is which. Interrogated by a cunning one, the wise man replies with the same cunning. Presented with an ambiguous question, he becomes a mirror, reflecting what he is given, offering an image of uncertainty. A visitor may then be asked by his host: "By what means did this one arrive where he is now?" Words can be heard from different strata of the mind. They may occupy different planes of the world simultaneously, and when the traveler simply answers "By boat," the earth and the world are found tightly interlaced, impossible to untangle. The boat may indeed be the earthly vehicle having carried his flesh to this part of the land, but it may also represent the help he received to reach this point in his life, this degree of insight into the world, or this clarity of vision of the way of the sky. "Where is this boat now?" He is then asked. "On the river," is the obvious reply. By boat or by land, the distinction lies in the efforts demanded of the traveler.[49] On

[49] See: 神保如天. 《従容録通解》。東京：無我山房, 1915. Page 360 (Case 51).

foot, it would seem that he relied on his own strength to get where he is now, but on a vehicle like a boat, it is clearer that it is the efforts of other forces or people that brought the vessel to its destination: the currents of the river, the winds occupying the sky, the knowledge of navigation of the captain, a great multitude of factors all coming together to carry him safely to this shore. Observed more closely, the distinction may nonetheless not be as clear as it appears. The distinction between the self and the other indeed only exists within the mind of the living, and the walker equally depends on the rest of the whole of nature to reach his destination as the navigator. Other living beings must sacrifice their flesh to allow his limbs to be set in motion. The weather must be sufficiently clement, and the earth must allow itself to be trodden upon, or else the wanderer's journey is doomed to failure. Standing on a deck or walking in wooden sandals, passing over water or dust, he always remains carried on the way of the sky, having little control over his course, and with the whole ineluctably going where it is meant to.

Witnessing such a play unfold before his eyes, the spectator should thus be watchful not to be fooled, and he should ask himself: isn't he the one being played by the two actors? Aren't the ambiguities of their exchange a mere trap, leading him to lose himself in the determination of the depth of this conversation, and of the degree of insight of its protagonists? To have the eye of the man of the way is to see the light of noon at midnight, and the darkness of midnight at noon, without feeling compelled to determine which is which, as such a distinction does not exist where he should be, the place with no high and low, no land or river, no wise man or fool. If you think he has the eye, you are blind, and if you think he does not, you are lost. To see without the eye, and to be blind to its presence or absence, this is an invaluable insight.

Case 62 —Dongshan Is Unwell —洞山不安

Source: The Book of Serenity Case 94.

【中】

jǔ dòng shān bù ān sēng wèn hé shàng bìng huán yǒu bú bìng zhě
舉。洞山不安。僧問：「和尚病，還有不病者
ma shān yún yǒu sēng yún bú bìng zhě huán kàn hé shàng fǒu
麼。」山云：「有。」僧云：「不病者還看和尚否。」
shān yún lǎo sēng kàn tā yǒu fèn sēng yún hé shàng kàn tā shí
山云：「老僧看他有分。」[1] 僧云：「和尚看他時
rú hé shān yún zé bú jiàn yǒu bìng
如何。」山云：「則不見有病。」

[1] 【有分】 [yǒu fèn]: "one is destined to [do something]" (有缘分).

【日】

舉す。洞山不安。僧問う、「和尚病む、還って病まざる者有りや。」山云く、「有り。」僧云く、「病まざる者は還って和尚を看るや否や。」山云く、「老僧他を看るに分有り。」僧云く、「和尚他を看る時如何。」山云く、「則ち病有ることを見ず。」

【E】

Dongshan was unwell. A monk asked: “The master is unwell. Is there anyone who is not sick?” Dongshan said, “There is.” The monk said, “Does the one who is not sick watch[1] over the master?” Dongshan said, “Fate compels this old monk to watch over that one.” The monk said, “How about when the master has watched that one?” Dongshan said, “Then this old monk no longer sees that there is a sickness.”

[1] Probably a play on words, based on the dual meaning of the word 看 [kàn], which means “to see” as well as “to watch over.” It may here refer to the fact of seeing one’s own nature as well as taking care of the sick.

It is all too easy to lose oneself in the wonders created by the mind, to escape the harshness of the earth and take refuge in the dreamlike creations of our imagination, but our mind is bound to our body and not an ethereal thing transcending earth and sky. When this earthly body is burdened by sickness, we are promptly brought back to the realm of the senses, having to face pain and impairment. The sensations of pain and discomfort certainly are some of the most primordial elements of the animal mind. They arose out of random changes in the tree of life while our ancestors were still floating creatures in the heart of the ocean, but as they revealed themselves to be an extremely powerful mechanism through which danger could be avoided and survival improved, their perception slowly spread and developed among the living. Without the classification of all things as painful or not, pleasurable or not, we in all

likelihood would not have survived our infancy. The discomfort of an illness encourages us to seek treatment and renders us more cautious. The pain of a sickness teaches us to strive to avoid what caused it in the future. Our senses are tightly knitted together with the ground of our mind, and without thought, without hesitation, we react to any assault on our being, to the vicious attacks of minuscule forms of life that invade our bloodstream, feasting on our energy, exhausting our strength, threatening to cause the gigantic piece of machinery formed by our body to collapse into ruin. But is there anyone who is not sick?

The human mind is a unique marvel of plasticity and ambivalence. Man may perceive the information offered by the senses, and then decide to transform this flow of perception, manipulating these sensations as he pleases, if he has learned the way to control them and sees his world with a sufficient degree of clarity. Afflicted by illness, the man of the way is like any other man. He experiences pain and has to bear the discomfort. A key difference is nonetheless that one who knows the nature of the world knows that these sensations are mere information, a command sent to our mind so that we may take steps to ensure our own survival, rather than a tangible property of the earth around us. The earth and the sky feel no pain. There is no illness outside of our mind. This realization opens up a new path for the living, allowing them to see beyond the horizon of their own survival and perpetuation. Fate indeed appears to call man to become more than a creature thoughtlessly responding to the commands of the senses, mindlessly reacting to the orders of his body, whose goal is only to prolong its life. More than survival, man is indeed endowed with the capacity to embrace the way of the sky, consciously releasing the illusion of the manifold nature of what the heavens enfold, ceasing to shatter its unity to turn it into a constellation of things that can be grasped by the mind. Then, life is no different from death, and one does not need to spend his days resisting the way itself, striving against death, which will still always come.

When one sees beyond the horizon of his own life, of his own self, and beholds the wholeness of the sky, he can then embrace death itself, not as a gloomy, nihilistic renunciation, but rather as the most wondrous feeling, the bliss of perfect communion with everything that is. The cries of the body may still be faintly heard by his consciousness, but they are no longer heeded. As the eyes contemplate the magnificent totality, the insignificant details are overlooked. Pain and discomfort are forgotten. The illness is of no consequence, as the barrier separating life from death has vanished into thin air. All that remains is a raw truth, perceived but not understood, experienced but not reflected upon, a sign of the remarkable health of the tree of life itself, still growing, still renewing itself, now conquering no-thing-ness itself!

Case 63 —The Barbarian Has No Beard —胡子無鬚

Source: The Gateless Barrier Case 4.

【中】

huò ān yuē xī tiān hú zi yīn shén wú xū
或庵 曰：「西天[1] 胡子[2] 因甚無鬚。」[3]

[1] 【胡子】 S:【鬍子】 [hú zi]: "barbarian" (may also mean "beard").

[2] 【西天】 [xī tiān]: "the Western Paradise" (in a Buddhist context) / "India."

[3] 【鬚】 S:【须】 [xū]: "a beard."

【日】

こ わくあんいわ さいてん こ す なん よ
舉す。或庵曰く、「西天の胡子、甚に因ってか
ひげ な
鬚無き。」

【E】

Huoan said, "Why hasn't the barbarian from the Western Paradise[1] a beard?"

[1] "The barbarian from the Western Paradise": That is, Bodhidharma, the first Patriarch of Zen, who came from India.

Block by block, word by word, our environment was built up by our forefathers. They painstakingly extracted the mud under their feet and cleaved the rocky soil to turn the earth into castles and skyscrapers. They reflected lengthily upon their condition and the nature of the world around them, inscribing the fruit of their meticulous efforts of the mind in scrolls and books. They patiently assembled grunts and shouts into speech to pour out their thoughts into the air and the ears of their neighbors. Each generation now stands upon the countless corpses of those who preceded them, allowing them to reach higher ground, to see farther than anyone before. The names of some of the pioneers who opened up entire new parcels of our world still echo through the air, long after the collapse of the empires and civilizations that gave birth to them, and these new lands of the mind, the new domains of the intellect,

are now naturally associated with their discoverers. Their wisdom is tied to their individuality, commonly expressed through their name but also through the depiction of their face, the outer mask that is seen when one speaks with someone. The world defines a man by the color of his eyes, the shape of his hair, or the length of his beard. His true self cannot be described with words nor painted with a brush, and thus men resort to this poor substitute, focusing on the face, often overlooking the truth that it veils.

The revelation of a truth ofttimes comes through the agency of the stranger. Incarnating the unfamiliar, he alone is able to break the blindness to the things that are the most familiar. Himself boldly venturing into the foreign, he is at all times confronted with something new, something peculiar, and thus in the best position to guide others to discover what is foreign to them. Coming from the other side of the earth, the pathfinder unites lands and peoples, demonstrating that all share a single nature, which simply waits to be unveiled. It is within and outside them, in their homeland and the foreign country, on the earth and in the skies. He is no prophet, nor is he a savior. He is nobody, no one, a man with no name, just a manifestation of the skies themselves, an inconspicuous whirlwind swiftly passing through the dusty alleys of an immense city, sweeping eons of dirt accumulated upon this world, finally revealing its original appearance to all those who spent their entire lives in this place, before disappearing, leaving only what he uncovered as a trace of his brief passage upon the earth.

Few are those who keep the revelation of the stranger in mind, themselves sweeping away the fine dust of the world to keep a clear vision of their own nature, but the passage of the great whirlwind coming from the farthest part of the earth still resonates within the city. It changed it profoundly, albeit only appearing subtly different to the inquisitive eye. Each gust of wind is a turbulence, a remnant of the whirlwind stirred up by the tail of the invisible dragon that was born out of the setting sun. The tallest trees are his whiskers. The stars are freckles upon his skin, and mountain ranges the spikes protruding from his back. When one passes in front of a mirror, it appears, and its mark is indelibly etched on the faces of all our beloved. He is no one, and everyone. His face is our face, and a bottomless chasm, a black hole out of which no thing can emerge. To see him is to see our true nature, what is left when all that defines us has been eroded by the winds and the rains, with our hair cut off, the color of our eyes and skin washed away, our facial features ground down, leaving only the emptiness of the skies found behind. Then, the east collapses into the west. One sees that the explorer never left his home. The barbarian we fear, and the wise man whose teachings we yearn for, were always shown in the mirror, as a crystal-clear reflection of the heavens.

Case 64 —Ruiyan's Master! —巖喚主人

Source: The Gateless Barrier Case 12.

【中】

ruì yán yàn hé shàng měi rì zì huàn zhǔ rén gōng fù zì yìng nuò
瑞巖彦[1] 和尚每日自喚主人公，[2] 復自應諾，
nǎi yún xīng xīng zhe nuò tā shí yì rì mò shòu rén mán
乃云：「『惺惺[3] 著』『喏。』『他時異日莫受人瞞[4]
nuò nuò
。』『喏喏。』」

[1] 【瑞巖彦】 [ruì yán yàn]: The last character (彦) is just an alternative name, left out of most translations.

[2] 【主人公】 [zhǔ rén gōng]: "the main protagonist."

[3] 【惺惺】 [xīng xīng]: describes a state of clarity of mind and wisdom.

[4] 【瞞】 S:【瞒】 [mán]: "obscuration."

【日】

こ ずいがん げんおしょう まいにちみずか しゅじんこう よ
擧す。瑞巖の彦和尚、毎日自ら主人公と喚び、
ま みずか おうだく すなわ いわ せいせいじゃく だく た じ
復た自ら應諾し、乃ち云く、「惺惺著、喏。他時
い じつ ひと まん う なか だくだく
異日、人の瞞を受くること莫れ、喏喏。」

【E】

Every day, Ruiyan called out to himself: "Master!" and answered to himself: "Yes, sir!" And then added: "Be clear-headed!" Again, he answered: "Yes, sir!" And then continued: "At all times, do not let your mind be obscured under the influence of men." "Yes, sir! Yes, sir!"

If an event of perception is to occur, there must be a subject and an object, someone who perceives and something that is perceived. Animals are unique in this respect, as they are endowed with senses allowing them to treat portions of their environment as objects, as things separate from others and from the background formed by the earth and the skies. This bough of the majestic tree of life stands out from its other parts,

and even more from the rest of nature, death itself, what is not living. Furthermore, it seems that only the paragon of animals, man, has been offered the peculiar gift of consciousness, thanks to which he may consider his own self, his own being, as an object of reflection, pondering the essence of being itself. He alone can perceive the errors of his ways and the shortcomings of his conduct. He alone can envision his destiny and see himself straying from the path leading him up to it. His remarkable ability, albeit seldom exploited to the fullest by a large portion of his species, confers on him the duty of admonishing himself so that he would not fall into the snares of the world.

Animals rose above the rest of life through their division of the whole of nature, using the knife of perception to cleave nature into earth and sky, and then to shatter both into a myriad of things, to hold sway over these things, and to defend their lives and perpetuate their kind. Man, in turn, rises above the rest of the animals by his perception of himself and of the mechanism by which he perceives, that is, by his insight concerning the nature of his own world. This should allow him to realize the true nature of being, the relationship between his world and the whole that it represents. The man of the way himself perceives his perception as a mere skillful means, a tool for survival and propagation of life, but it also represents a subtle way to appear to step out of the whole of nature to better realize its nature as a whole. Man is an ego that is destined to proclaim the illusory nature of the ego. He is a paradoxical being, standing out from the whole of being by seeing what is not himself as an object, alone in ec-stasy, as he contemplates his own nature and mends the pieces shattered by his perception, until he sees only the tree of life growing between earth and sky, before these realms are themselves mended together, piece by piece, to reveal the whole that always was, is, and will be, seeing the essence beyond things, the truth beyond the illusions of the world. But arduous it is for man to keep these pieces together, and not let his mind shatter the creation once more into a million pieces. He must admonish himself, not to forget the illusory nature of the self, comically playing his part, treating himself as an object of rebuke, knowing that the character that admonishes is no less and no more illusory than his consciousness itself.[50]

To be clear-headed is to see through one's own head, seeing that it does not exist. There is only one thing, and this thing is no-thing-ness, the great sky, perfectly clear and yet where nothing can be seen, only an unceasing tempest of light and sound, an undistinguishable totality, only veiled when one is tempted by the desire to survive and endure, forcing one to stand out from the rest and to sow disunity, plunging back into

[50]See: Yamada, Kou'un, *Mumonkan (Gateless Gate)* [Unpublished manuscript]: "When Ruiyan calls 'Master!' you may think that the one who calls is his superficial 'I' and the master called to is his true essential nature. That is a misconception. The one calling Ruiyan and the one called are both Ruiyan's essential nature."

the world of gains and losses, life and death, pain and pleasure. One is nonetheless always capable of jumping out of the trap of the world, extending a helpful hand to himself, calling himself to caution, with this "self" encompassing all that is.

Case 65 —The National Teacher's Three Callings —國師三喚

Source: The Gateless Barrier Case 17.

【中】

guó shī sān huàn shì zhě shì zhě sān yìng guó shī yún jiāng wèi wú gū fù rǔ yuán lái què shì rǔ gū fù wú

國師三喚侍者，侍者三應，國師云：「將謂吾辜負[1] 汝，元來[2] 却是汝辜負吾。」

[1] 【辜負】 S:【辜负】 [gū fù]: "to let down" / "to disappoint."

[2] 【元來】 S:【元来】 [yuán lái]: variant of 原來 [yuán lái], meaning "originally."

【日】

こ こくしみ じしゃ よ じしゃみ
擧す。國師三たび侍者を喚ぶ。侍者三たび
おう こくしいわ まさおも われ なんじ こふ
應ず。國師云く、「將に謂えり、吾、汝に辜負す
がんらいかえ こ なんじ われ こふ
と、元來却って是れ汝、吾に辜負す。」

【E】

The National Teacher called his attendant three times, and three times his attendant reacted[1] to his calling. The National Teacher then said, "It may seem that I am disappointing you with all this calling, but in fact, it is you who are disappointing me!"

[1] "Reacted": the original text does not indicate the nature of this reaction, which may have been a verbal reply, a gesture, or a mere movement.

The student of the world each day learns a new thing. He gathers the creations of mankind inside his mind, making a temple of knowledge with

them. With each year that passes, new walls are built within it, enclosing him within a tower, as he feels proud of the extent of his possessions, the range of his understanding. But the embracer of the way, the lover of the desert, rather chooses the untrodden path, making his way out of the walls built by men. Each day, he merrily lets go of one thing, and with the passing of each new moon, it is entire rooms that are left to crumble, the last trace of them soon completely forgotten.[51] One by one, he lets the things burdening him fall down to the ground as he calmly advances into the place devoid of any thing, leaving a trail behind him, showing his steady progress. Soon, his hands are empty. The yoke that weighed down his shoulders is now nowhere to be found. He walks on, naked, his skin stroked by the torrid gusts, scratched by the sand, scorched by the afternoon sun. Having nothing left on him to let go, he thus begins to let go of his self, shedding off his own skin, offering his body to the earth, having no longer need of his senses, as he knows that where he goes, there is nothing to be felt. Taking off his leathery costume allowing him to feel contact with the earth, throwing away his eyes and his ears, as there no longer is anything he wishes to see and hear, he becomes a ghost of the desert, a disincarnate, ethereal shadow of the man, but this state of ec-stasy is precisely what allows a man to truly be, experiencing being beyond the boundaries of his skin, outside of the walls of the self, being the dune moved year by year by the winds, the moon glowing on the dark canvas of the night, or the drop of dew on a desiccated bone evaporating at the break of dawn.

When a voice resounds in the air near the city gate separating the world from the desert, calling for someone familiar with the great expanse where nothing is seen or heard, the only persons who answer are those who have yet to know this mysterious location, those who will have nothing to say of it. The desert dweller is an invisible gust of wind, an immaterial ray of light. His presence may be felt by the men of the world, but he himself does not heed their voice and pays no attention to their erratic gesticulations. In the vast, deserted plains facing the great walls, there are no questions, no reproach, and no pride. There is only one person, talking to himself in incomprehensible words, only one thing.[52] If you hear a voice, you have yet to discover this place. If you try to discern right and wrong, clarity and obscurity, it means you have yet to let go of your burden. Every voice is your voice, and every sound calls upon you. You are alone, and there is nothing around you. The world is within the desert, and it is the desert. Your self is within the desert,

[51]See this sentence from Laozi's Dao De Jing: "In the pursuit of learning, every day something is acquired. In the pursuit of the way, every day something is lost." Original Chinese: 「為學日益，為道日損。」. From: 阿部吉雄。《新积漢文大系〈7〉老子莊子上卷》。東京：明治書院, 1966. Page 86 (Chapter 48).

[52]See: Yamada, Kou'un, *Mumonkan (Gateless Gate)* [Unpublished manuscript]: "When one thing or person manifests itself on the stage, there can be nothing else. Everything and every person is completely solitary."

and it is the desert, beautiful and empty, plain and mysterious, without limits or end.

Case 66 —Preaching Dharma from the Third Seat —三座説法

Source: The Gateless Barrier Case 25.

This case is very similar to Book of Serenity, case 90, but here it is the third seat that is mentioned, while it is the second seat in the Book of Serenity.[53]

【中】

yǎng shān hé shàng mèng jiàn wǎng mí lè suǒ ān dì sān zuò yǒu yì zūn
仰山 和尚夢見往 彌勒 所安第三座，有一尊
zhě bái chuí yún jīn rì dāng dì sān zuò shuō fǎ shān nǎi qǐ bái chuí
者白槌[1] 云:「今日當第三座說法。」山 乃起 白槌
yún mó hē yǎn fǎ lí sì jù jué bǎi fēi dì tīng dì tīng
云:「摩訶衍法，[2] 離四句絕百非，[3] 諦聽[4] 諦聽。」

[1] 【白槌】 [bái chuí]: In a Buddhist context, it designates the use of a white stick to mark the beginning or the end of a ritual.

[2] 【摩訶衍】 S:【摩诃衍】 [mó hē yǎn]: Abbreviation of 摩訶衍那 [mó hē yǎn na], transliteration of the Sanskrit "mahāyāna" (महायान) the "great vehicle [of Buddhism]."

[3] 【四句百非】[sì jù bǎi fēi]: Yamada Kou'un offers the following explanation concerning these "four phrases and hundred negations": "the four phrases, seen in terms of Buddha-nature, for example, concern whether there is Buddha-nature or not. To say there is Buddha-nature is one phrase. To say there isn't is another. To say that there is and is not (i.e., that sometimes there is sometimes there isn't) is another phrase. And finally there may be neither having nor not having, which makes the fourth and final phrase. It is said that all arguments fall within these four categories and that is why they are known as the four phrases. However, each of these four phrases contains yet another four phrases. In the first phrase of having is contained that having, but also not-having, neither having nor not having, and both having and not-having. That gives us a total of sixteen. When we see this in terms of past, present and future, we must multiply by three, which gives us a total of forty-eight. In addition, we must think in terms of the forty-eight which have already occurred (past) and the forty-eight which have yet to occur (future) which then gives us a total of ninety-six. To this we now add the initial four phrases to obtain an even hundred. This is known as the 'hundred negations.'" (From: Yamada, Kou'un, *Hekiganroku (Blue Cliff Record)* [Unpublished manuscript])

[4] 【諦聽】 S:【谛听】 [dì tīng]: "to listen carefully."

【日】

こ きょうざんおしょう ゆめ みろく ところ ゆ だいさん
擧す。仰山和尚、夢に彌勒の所に往いて第三
ざ あん み いっそんじゃ あ びゃくつい
座に安ぜらるるを見る。一尊者有り、白槌して

[53] See Book of Serenity, case 90: 擧。仰山夢往彌勒所。居第二座尊者白云。今日當第二座說法山乃起白椎云摩訶衍法 (此義文長) 離四句絕百非。謹白。

云く、「今日第三座の説法に當る。」山乃ち起って白槌して云く、「摩訶衍の法は四句を離れ百非を絶す。諦聽、諦聽」というを見る。

【E】

Yangshan dreamt that he went to Maitreya's abode, sitting in his third seat. A venerable one struck the gavel and said, "Today the one who sits in the third seat will preach the Dharma." Yangshan arose and, striking the gavel, said, "The Mahayana teaching goes beyond the Four Propositions and it transcends the Hundred Negations.[1] Listen carefully!"

[1] See note 3 of the Chinese text.

The teaching of a liar may surpass that of a truthful man. A fleeting dream may offer us a clearer vision of the reality of the earth than years of life upon its face. Perhaps the best way to approach what slips away, and to perceive the unfathomable, is to go the other way, to flee what we are tempted to seek, and to embrace the illusion while we yearn for truth.

Spending a night in the land of dreams, appearing to leave our body, weary of the toil of the daytime, behind in our bed chamber, is a precious opportunity to peer beyond the frontier of our earthly horizon, to venture into a realm where our flesh cannot follow us, and where we are not bound by the laws of the skies that constrain so many aspects of our existence. In our dream, the theatre of our world, the vessel of our imagination and of our unconscious self, we can join together the past and future, experiencing the whole of time in our presence. We can feel without our senses, seemingly detached from our body, soaring like an eagle or swimming like a dolphin, radiating light more brightly than a star, or floating like a speck of dust caught in the spring breeze. Free from the boundaries tied to the earth and the skies, our body and our world, we may there envision our true nature, what we are when our individuality has been relinquished and when the hindrances on our way have all been cleared out. There, where nothing is impossible, where all things are illusions, may we finally be able to experience truth, and ex-press it for all eyes to see, for all ears to hear. Sitting in front of the whole

of the creation, on the peak of the great mountain whose foundation encompasses the entire earth, we then strike the gavel used to call for an assembly, with vigor and precision, stirring up a wave propagating throughout the entire world, shaking all its audience to its core, sweeping away the dust covering the whole surface of the earth. This sound echoes with the primordial wave that marked the great expansion of the skies themselves. It is a reply to it, honoring the experience of being, the joy of existence, and the realization of what the fundamental law of the skies is, something that can only be felt when the body and the self have been willingly left behind.

Listening carefully to the echo resonating throughout the skies, shaking the core of the earth, one should not need to hear anything else to know the fundamental law of the skies, the ground of all things. The dreamer nonetheless feels compelled to proclaim the inadequacy of the world, using the tools of the world itself. Wholeheartedly expelling the air filling his chest, letting his vocal cords be enthralled by this flow, he utters a proclamation can be heard on the other side of the earth: "The fundamental law of the skies goes beyond all words and teachings. It cannot be seen with the eyes of the world!" If these words are understood, it means that one does not see what this law is. When the words are heard as a chorus to the great sound, with all forming a single note echoing through the ages, without the slightest trace of meaning, a speck of understanding, then will the tune be heard. Then will the instrument, the heavens themselves, be seen and be heard, without player or played, no seats and no one that would sit, no actor or audience, but only being itself.

Case 67 —The Ox Passes the Window —牛過窓櫺

Source: The Gateless Barrier Case 38.

【中】

wǔ zǔ yuē pì rú shuǐ gǔ niú guò chuānglíng tóu jiǎo sì tí dōu guò liǎo yīn shén me wèi bā guò bù dé

五祖曰：「譬如水牯牛[1] 過窓櫺，[2] 頭角四蹄都過了，因甚麼尾巴過不得。」

[1] 【牯牛】 [gǔ niú]: "a castrated ox."

[2] 【窓櫺】 [chuāng líng]: "a window's lattice."

【日】

舉す。五祖曰く、「譬えば水牯牛の窓櫺を過ぐるが如き、頭角四蹄都べて過ぎ了るに、甚麼に因ってか尾巴過ぐることを得ざる。」

【E】

Wuzu said, “For example, suppose an ox passes a latticed window. Its head, its horns, and its four hoofs all pass, but why can’t the tail pass?”

Awakened by the chirping of the swallows joyfully flying around, we open up the drapes covering our window, and let a flood of light penetrate our chamber and our eyes, offering us a vision of the landscape surrounding our home. It may be a bucolic countryside, with meadows covered with wild flowers and tall grasses, or a brutal set of concrete towers with ant-like throngs of men walking around in the streets to build up this monument to the glory of mankind further, but what we behold is an assembly of things, seen through the lens of our eyes, the glass sheet of the window, with its lattice cutting further this vision into neat squares, concealing some of its elements. Our eyes do not directly grasp the world in front of us. We do not perceive it without mediation, but rather only construct an image of it, using the radiance of our star or the light emitted by fires kindled by men that bounces on this world, imparting a pattern, from which we infer the nature of our surroundings, to this field of light. Quite a few men see this world, but fail to see their own seeing, and see that there are things that they do not see.

An ox suddenly begins to pass in front of the window of a man of the way, someone whose eyes are wide open, and who sees through all things. The imposing body of the beast passes in front of him, but it never finishes passing. Its tail passes through, again and again, but it never ends. It extends to the end of the world and passes until the completion of time itself. When one sees the earth and the sky beyond things, their essence rather than their appearance, the whole rather than the thousands of parts cut out by the mind, then the line separating things is abolished, and there is no head or tail, no beast and no pasture. The scenery unfolding before his eyes is continuously moving, but there is nothing that begins or ends, nothing to be seen, and nothing that is concealed, only an indistinct, wondrous vision of an unadulterated truth.

Standing right next to the man of the way, a novice also watches the beast through the window. Its head and its four legs pass through, but

strangely, its tail appears hidden by the lattice, and thus he does not see it, and knows not whether it passed or not, will pass or not, but he fails to fathom the role played by the lattice itself in this illusion. Too close to his eyes and too familiar, the lattice has become invisible to him, and what it veils remains unseen, without him seeing his own incapacity to see. He thus deludes himself.

We, those watching these two men while pondering the nature of their sight, are we yet not standing upon a great trap, large enough for an ox to fall into? If we see the animal pass through, we fall into the trap. If we fail to see it pass through, we are caught by the snare. The tail is coiled tightly around our neck, threatening to strangle us and cause our death, relieving us of all our pains and delusions.[54] The greatest danger is, all the same, not in front of us, but rather behind our eyes. If one thinks a buffalo is something other than what it is, he is lost. Without thought, without reflection, simply letting the senses receive the seal of the earth, life, and the sky, as a single imprint applied in one instant, then will one see the window and himself through the eyes of the beast, through the point of view of the window's lattice, from the perspective of the grasses, from the eye of the sky, and all questions will find their answer.

[54]See Wumen's verse on this case: "It passes through and falls into a pit. It turns back and is then destroyed. This tiny tail, how extraordinary it is!" Chinese original: 「過去墮坑塹回來却被壞者些尾巴子直是甚奇怪」, From: 《禪宗無門關》。 CBETA (Case 38).

Part III

The Summer of the World

When the wheat fields become a carpet of golden bristles covering the land, caressed by blazing gusts of air as the sky blinds those impudent enough to behold the radiant face of the sphere of fire generously feeding life with its brilliance, men water the cracked soil with their sweat while savoring the juicy fruits of their orchards, celebrating the flourishing of life, the overcoming of death.

Darkness is now rarely found in the land. The days are long, and the short nights are spent dreaming, without man paying any attention to them. His entire world is flooded with light, with every single thing exposed to the inquisitive gaze of its inhabitants, every detail clearly seen, and myriads of elements continuously catching their attention. Encircled by things, enwalled in this imposing citadel built by his kind, man, despite this fact, begins to think that the reach of his gaze represents the extent of all that is. So intricate and exquisitely crafted are the mosaics of things surrounding him from all parts that he forgets these are his own creations, the products of his mind and his hands.

Inebriated by the profusions of images found in his world, enthralled by its power, allowing man to create and represent, he builds it higher and climbs to new heights, without pondering his destination, the end of his relentless labor. He is, however, still blessed with luck, as no matter how high he climbs, there are men over there who have not let themselves be deceived by the revealing power of the summer brilliance, who see this gigantic structure for what it is, a mere sign, an image veiling the luminous truth of the heavens, a rampart eclipsing the glorious sun so that its dwellers would not find themselves blinded by this truth, and would rather enjoy the wonder of sight, the beauty of the discerning of the myriad of things and the bliss of an act of creation. These kings of the world know its power and its dangers all too well. They honor this world and observe its innumerable pieces with a benevolent gaze, but unlike most of those sleeping within its walls, they know upon what this world is built, and what lies beyond its borders. They thus skillfully make use of the flood of brilliance running down from the heavens into these angular streets, wielding this light to point out the minute cracks in the seemingly invulnerable ramparts forming the frame of their cherished citadel. The weaknesses of the world are revealed together with its strength by the summer sun, and when the eye of the uninitiated approaches these interstices, he is struck by the revelation of the artificial nature of his world. The images depicted by the mosaics now appear broken, and their deceitful nature suddenly becomes manifest.

Violently striking the pavement with his iron staff, the guide enlarges the cracks in the walls, letting the light shining beyond the walls shine through them, offering the spectator a glimpse of what may lie out there. This is when the truth of the world finally begins to be seen. Veiling the brilliance of the heavens, the walls allow one to

be momentarily cured of the pernicious cecity affecting those who only know the radiant truth lying beyond them. When this shroud is blown away by the summer gusts, man then realizes that the blindness of the impudent observer of the sun is the purest vision of the truth of all the things of the world, the same that was experienced when contemplating the frozen landscapes of winter. Everything was then covered in snow, and everything is now wrapped in absolute brilliance.

The eyes once again turned toward the brick walls, the paved streets, and the throngs of men passing through them in haste, the cecity then slowly fades away, and the things of the world once again emerge in man's eyes. Every thing appears in its place, and yet, something has nonetheless irremediably been altered. He now sees the truth of the world around him, not only seeing the light reflected upon them but also the light that is at their heart, like a million images of a single sun. Thankful for this invaluable insight, the eyes are then closed, and a deep bow is conscientiously performed, while the discomfort of the summer heat is now but a distant memory, and the heart rejoices without restraint.

Case 68 —The Dharma That Has Not Been Preached —不為人說的法

Source: The Blue Cliff Record Case 28.

【中】

jǔ nán quán cān bǎi zhàng niè pán hé shàng zhàng wèn cóng shàng
舉。南泉 參百丈涅槃 和尚。丈 問：「從上
zhū shèng huán yǒu bú wèi rén shuō di fǎ ma quán yún yǒu zhàng
諸聖，還有不為人說底法麼。」泉 云：「有。」丈
yún zuò me shēng shì bú wèi rén shuō di fǎ quán yún bú shì xīn
云：「作麼生是不為人說底法。」泉 云：「不是心，
bú shì fó bú shì wù zhàng yún shuō liǎo yě quán yún mǒu
不是佛，不是物。」丈 云：「說了也。」泉 云：「某
jiǎ zhī rèn me hé shàng zuò me shēng zhàng yún wǒ yòu bú shì dà shàn
甲只恁麼，和尚作麼生。」丈 云：「我又不是大善
zhī shí zhēng zhī yǒu shuō bù shuō quán yún mǒu jiǎ bú huì zhàng
知識，爭知有說不說。」泉 云：「某甲不會。」丈
yún wǒ tài shā wèi ěr shuō liǎo yě
云：「我太殺[1] 為爾說了也。」

[1] 【太殺】 [tài shā]: "too explicitly" / "too much." The Japanese version uses the character 煞 instead, whose meaning is similar here. The same use can be seen in case 100.

【日】

舉す。南泉、百丈の涅槃和尚に參ず。丈問う、「從上の諸聖、還た人の爲に說かざる底の法ありや。」泉云く、「有り。」丈云く、「作麼生か是れ人の爲に說かざる底の法。」泉云く、「不是心、不是佛、不是物。」丈云く、「說き了れり。」泉云く、「某甲は只だ恁麼、和尚は作麼生。」丈云く、「我れ又た是れ大善知識にあらず、爭か說くと說かざると有ることを知らん。」泉云く、「某甲會せず。」丈云く、「我れ太煞だ爾が爲に說き了れり。」

【E】

Nanquan went to visit Master Baizhang Niepan. Baizhang asked: “Is there any Dharma that has not been preached to men by the holy ones of the past?” Nanquan said, “There is.” Baizhang asked: “What is this Dharma that has never been preached to men?” Nanquan said, “It is not the mind, not a Buddha, not a thing.” Baizhang said, “It has already been said.” Nanquan said, “For this fellow here, it is only like that. How about the Master?” Baizhang said, “I am not a man endowed with great knowledge. How would I know whether it has already been said or not?” Nanquan said, “This fellow here does not understand.” Baizhang said, “I have already explained it too much for you!”

Playing with words as with swords, the men of experience point out with their tongues the weaknesses of the foundation of man’s world, the absurdity of men’s musings. The fundamental law of nature, the ground of being, is precisely what cannot be adequately represented within the world, with words and concepts. It is because the living cannot perceive the unadulterated truth of being that their minds were forced to devise

ways of transforming this thing, this law, into a myriad of things that can be grasped by their senses and their reason.

One may then ask whether there is one thing, one fundamental law that has yet to be preached to men. The answer would come swiftly, thrown into the air without a moment's hesitation, a resounding yes! What has yet to be preached is not the mind. It is not to be found in the form of words and sentences, in speech, or in scriptures. It is neither a person nor an idea. The world cannot contain it. It is therefore nowhere to be found within it, and its dwellers are thus condemned to remain ignorant of its existence.

What has yet to be preached is not an awakening or our true nature. It transcends the separation between the common and the holy, the deluded and the enlightened. These distinctions belong to man's world, and "it" stubbornly resists capture by the world.

What has yet to be preached is not a thing. It is not bounded, not a cut-out piece of the world that can be grasped by the mind and manipulated. It cannot be examined and judged. Any attempt at comprehending it is sure to fail.

The present discourse explaining what has yet to be preached yet does not bring its audience closer to it, and of itself sheds no light upon it. One may read a thousand volumes concerning the smell of a lily, but all this knowledge is immediately surpassed by the briefest experience of smelling the sweet fragrance of this flower. What is to be learned within the world is that the world is an arbitrary construction made by man, filled with illusions, but that there is truth beyond its walls, raw and incomprehensible, which can, even so, be experienced, without being defined and transformed into a thing of the world. Is there any fundamental law of nature or thing that has yet to be preached to men? An answer would be that there is not a single fundamental law or thing that has already been preached to men! The preaching they heard is not the truth of being but rather words disguised as this truth. Not a single thing is known to us, without the mask of falsehood overlaid by our world upon it. When all forms of preaching have been forgotten, and all things will have been unlearned, then it will appear, and then our mouths will remain silent, our ears and our eyes will be wide open, our arms and palms extended, and only "it" will remain, like the summer sun bountifully illuminating the whole land, blinding the living with perfect clarity, offering them the vivifying warmth causing them to leave behind their lair, their clothes, all the things burdening them, as they will no longer need anything else.

Case 69 —Zhizang's Head Is White, Hai's Head Is Black —藏頭白海頭黑

Source: The Blue Cliff Record Case 73.

This case is identical to the Book of Serenity, case 6.

【中】

jǔ sēng wèn mǎ dà shī lí sì jù jué bǎi fēi qīng shī
舉。僧問馬大師：「『離四句，絕百非[1]』，請師
zhí zhī mǒu jiǎ xī lái yì mǎ shī yún wǒ jīn rì láo juàn bù néng
直指某甲西來意。」馬師云：「我今日勞倦，不能
wèi rǔ shuō wèn qǔ zhì zàng qù sēng wèn zhì zàng zàng yún hé
為汝說，問取智藏去。」僧問智藏，藏云：「何
bú wèn hé shàng sēng yún hé shàng jiào lái wèn zàng yún wǒ
不問和尚。」僧云：「和尚教來問。」藏云：「我
jīn rì tóu tòng bù néng wèi rǔ shuō wèn qǔ hǎi xiōng qù sēng wèn hǎi
今日頭痛，不能為汝說。問取海兄去。」僧問海
xiōng hǎi yún wǒ dào zhè lǐ què bú huì sēng jù sì mǎ dà shī
兄。海云：「我到這裏却不會。」僧舉似馬大師，
mǎ shī yún zàng tóu bái hǎi tóu hēi
馬師云：「藏頭白，海頭黑。」

[1] 【離四句，絕百非】 [lí sì jù , jué bǎi fēi]: See the note for the 66th case (The Gateless Barrier case 25 / The Book of Serenity case 90).

【日】

こ そう ば だいし と しく はな ひゃっぴ
舉す。僧、馬大師に問う、「四句を離れ百非を
ぜっ こし それがし せいらい いじきし ば
絶して、請う師、某甲に西來意を直指せよ。」馬
しいわ われこんにち つかれ なんじ ため と
師云く、「我今日、勞倦たり。汝が爲に說くこと
あた ちぞう といと ゆ そう ちぞう と
能わず。智藏に問取いに去け。」僧、智藏に問う。
ぞういわ なん おしょう と そういわ おしょう
藏云く、「何ぞ和尚に問わざる。」僧云く、「和尚、
き と ぞういわ われこんにち ずつう なんじ
來たり問わしむ。」藏云く、「我今日、頭痛す。汝が
ため と あた かいひん と ゆ そう
爲に說くこと能わず。海兄に問取いに去け。」僧、
かいひん と かいいわ わ ここ いた かえ
海兄に問う。海云く、「我れ這裏に到って却って
え そう ば だいし こじ ばしいわ ぞう
會せず。」僧、馬大師に舉似す。馬師云く、「藏

とう　しろ　　かいとう　くろ
頭は白く、海頭は黒し。」

【E】

A monk asked Great Master Ma: "'Going beyond the four propositions and transcending the hundred negations,'[1] please, master, explain to me plainly the meaning of Bodhidharma's coming from the West." Master Ma said, "I am tired today; I can't explain it to you. Go and ask Zhizang." The monk asked Zhizang about it. Zhizang said, "Why don't you ask the master?" The monk said, "The master told me to ask you." Zhizang said, "I have a headache today; I can't explain it to you. Go and ask Brother Hai." The monk asked Brother Hai about it. Hai said, "I have lived thus far and still I don't understand its meaning." The monk mentioned this to Great Master Ma. The Great Master said, "Zhizang's head is white, Hai's head is black."

[1] "The four propositions and transcending the hundred negations": See the note for case 66 (Gateless Barrier case 25 / Book of Serenity case 90).

The young is eager for understanding, and enthusiastically delving into mountains of scrolls, swimming through rivers of characters, he should soon realize that what he seeks will not be found there. The words of the philosophers will not quench his thirst for clarity, and the preaching of the holy ones will not satiate his hunger for meaningfulness, but if he looks for the sun inside the walls of a library, he is doomed to waste his efforts. A revelation will only come when he flees the books and throws away the parchments, passing through the threshold of his world to venture into the open country, where the extent of the sky can be contemplated, rather than merely read about.

The simple nonetheless continues to ask for explanations about what goes beyond words and characters. He asks, "Why did the pathfinders clear out the path in front of them? What is the meaning of this? " The masters have no explanation, as there is nothing to explain. They can only tell him to go on his way, to extensively roam the earth and explore the world, encountering men who have widely different walks of life, and have taken various sinuous paths to arrive where they are now. The journey itself is the destination. The road is a better teacher than

the man standing at the end of the path, who will simply tell him: "I do not have the answer you seek." What is the meaning of the pathfinder's clearing out of the path? To this, one should perhaps answer: Is there anything that is not the meaning of the pathfinder's clearing out of the path?[55] The answer is right in front of him at all times, at every single step of the great journey of life. There is only one possible meaning, encompassing the whole of the earth and the skies. If you look for it, it vanishes. If you abandon your quest to understand, then the light will appear in your eyes. Then, the day a newcomer to the way will ask you for the great meaning, you will tell him to ask another, sending him on a fool's errand, in the hope that his foolishness may become apparent to him on the way. Sent to the four corners of the earth, without an answer, he may realize the futility of his enterprise. He is like a fish begging for water from other fish in the ocean, complaining that it dies of thirst.

When the fool gets used to receiving the same welcome at each station of his pilgrimage in search of meaning, his host then recognizes the opportune time to strike, to break this debilitating lethargy that begins to take root in his heart, convincing him that they are just making a fool of him. Then comes an answer: "I have lived thus far, and still I don't understand its meaning." The brutal honesty offers a stark contrast to the behavior of his predecessors, who simply sent the pilgrim to his next destination. The absence of understanding nonetheless does not imply an absence of meaning. To understand is to grasp with one's reason, to force something into the mold of the world, expressing it with words and concepts. The aim is not to understand, but to incarnate, to follow the path cleared out in front of us and bring others to it. One is not destined to understand the pathfinder's journey, but to become the pathfinder himself, and to perform the same journey, going from east to west, from west to east, until one ceases to know where the sun rises and sets, ceases to perceive the contrast between the white brilliance of the day and black darkness of the night, living an existence transcending these oppositions, seeing their seamless unity, understanding nothing, but seeing no-thing, that is, everything.

Case 70 —Being Despised by Men —若為人輕賤

Source: The Blue Cliff Record Case 97.

This case is identical to the Book of Serenity, case 58.

[55]See: Yamada, Kou'un, *Hekiganroku (Blue Cliff Record)* [Unpublished manuscript], quoting Yasutani Haku'un: "Where is there anything which is not the meaning of the patriarch's coming from the West?" Original Japanese: 「西来意ならざるものがどこにあるかい。」From: 山田耕雲。《碧岩集提唱山田耕雲》。[Unpublished manuscript]

【中】

jǔ jīn gāng jīng yún ruò wéi rén qīng jiàn shì rén xiān shì zuì
舉。《金剛經》云：「若為人輕賤，是人先世罪
yè yīng duò è dào yī jīn shì rén qīng jiàn gù xiān shì zuì yè zé
業，應墮惡道，[1] 以今世人輕賤故，先世罪業，則
wéi xiāo miè
為消滅。」

[1] 【惡道】 S:【恶道】 [è dào]: Designates three realms: the realm of "hell" (地獄), the realm of the "hungry ghosts" (餓鬼), and the realm of "animals" (畜生).

【日】

こ こんごうきょう いわ も ひと はずかし
舉す。『金剛經』に云く、「若し人に輕賤めら
こ ひと せんせい ざいごう まさ あくどう
れなば、是の人は先世の罪業ありて、應に惡道に
だ こんせ ひと はずかし もっ ゆえ
墮すべきを、今世の人の輕賤むるを以ての故に、
せんせい ざいごう すなわ ため しょうめつ
先世の罪業は、則ち爲に消滅す。」

【E】

The Diamond Sutra says: "If one is despised by other men, it is because of the karma originating from the sins that one has committed while in a past world. If one falls into hell as a result of this karma originating from the sins that one has committed while living in a past world, the fact that one is despised by the men living in the present world will cause the extinction of this karma originating from one's sins."

The commoner strives for holiness, and the holy one battles to reach everydayness. When presented with a piece of scripture, the commoner of the world will plunge into the characters, seeing them as a holy truth, a precious gift that should be appropriated through the deciphering of its meaning and by making it part of his life. Ignorant of the vicissitudes of this piece of language that has been written down when vastly different empires ruled over the earth and that has seen them rise and fall before reaching his hand now, he for all that puts his trust in it. Products of a long tradition, accepted by a community as a treasure shedding light on the path to be taken, these words are heartily welcomed by the followers,

with few of them pondering whether these signs are preserved for their truth or seen as true because they were preserved. A holy one, when presented with a piece of scripture, will not even extend his hand to take it, already knowing the truth it expresses and not wanting to soil his hands with the falsehood it ineluctably carries with it, as all things of the world, which are muddied by the nature of this realm. A man of the way is, however, neither common nor holy. He does not abide in the sanctuary, nor does he dwell in the profane land. He carries the piece of scripture with him, but he sees beyond characters and words. He sees through the black ink and the white paper and beholds the whole of the earth in this fragment offered to him by the world. The fundamental truth is indeed to be found on this sheet of paper, but not in the form of ideas, but rather as a tangible manifestation of the earth itself, enfolded by the sky, with the summer sun consuming this parchment, imparting to it its golden tint, erasing with the passing of years the sooty liquid coating it, causing this part of the world to crumble under the assault of the star. To read and understand the words inscribed upon this sheet of paper is to deviate from the path, but to fail to perceive the truth of this scripture is akin to opposing it.[56]

The words of the scriptures are meant to guide the dwellers of the world, those bogged down in the mire of delusion, exhausting their strength to avoid what they see as bad conduct. These words teach them the link between cause and consequence, which forms a gigantic chain extending from the dawn of time until its dusk, with their life being only a minuscule part of it. They suffer the consequences of causes set in motion long before they were thrown onto the earth and first saw the light of the heavens, and their actions will echo throughout the future, affecting living beings that have yet to be born. Reassured by the comforting words of tradition, the pious man of the world takes refuge in them, and these words accompany him throughout the hardships of his existence. Despised by the worldly for his disinterest in the affairs of the world, he takes pride in virtuous conduct and good merits. Such a life, albeit full of dignity, nonetheless misses the mark and remains an existence of slavery to the world rather than one in harmony with the way of the sky. The latter is indeed characterized by a release of the world, and a release by the world. The man living such an existence roams free on the earth, naked, stripped of all his possessions, even the ideas that once encumbered his mind. Never abiding anywhere, his hands empty and his mind as clear as the summer sky, he lives where there is no past, no present, and no future. There, there is no notion of cause and

[56]See Wansong's preface to this case: "To understand the meaning by basing oneself upon the scriptures is to be an enemy of the Buddhas of the three times; To deviate from the scriptures by a single word is to stray as much as if one spoke the words of demons." Chinese original: 「依經解義。三世佛冤。離經一字。返同魔說。」, From: 《萬松老人評唱天童覺和尚頌古從容庵錄》。 CBETA (Case 58).

consequence, sin and virtue, pride or contempt. He is still caught in the whirlwind embraced by the skies, but it is perceived in its totality, through time and space, one speck of dust gathering infinity and eternity into one sole thing, which itself soon vanishes into no-thing-ness.[57]

Case 71 —Zhaozhou Investigate the Old Lady —趙州勘婆

Source: The Gateless Barrier Case 31.

A less complete version of this case can be found in the Book of Serenity, case 10.[58]

【中】

zhào zhōu yīn sēng wèn pó zi tái shān lù xiàng shén chù qù pó
趙州 因僧問婆子：「臺山[1] 路向甚處去。」婆
yún mò zhí qù sēng cái xíng sān wǔ bù pó yún hǎo gè shī
云：「驀直[2] 去。」僧纔行三五步，婆云：「好箇師
sēng yòu rèn me qù hòu yǒu sēng jǔ sì zhōu zhōu yún dài wǒ
僧，又恁麼去。」後有僧舉似 州， 州 云：「待我
qù yǔ ěr kān guò zhè pó zi míng rì biàn qù yì rú shì wèn pó yì
去與爾勘過這婆子。」明日便去，亦如是問，婆亦
rú shì dá zhōu guī wèi zhòng yuē tái shān pó zi wǒ yǔ ěr kān pò
如是答， 州 歸謂眾曰：「臺山婆子，我與爾勘破
liǎo yě
了也。」

[1] 【臺山】 [tái shān]: Mount Wutai (abbreviated Taishan), in Shanxi, sacred to Manjushri and a famous location for pilgrimages, as it was said that visits to its temple gave wisdom to the pilgrims.

[2] 【驀直】 S:【蓦直】 [mò zhí]: "straight ahead."

【日】

こ じょうしゅう ちな そう ば す と たいざん
舉す。趙州、因みに僧、婆子に問う、「台山の
みち いず ところ むか さ ばあい まくじき
路、甚れの處に向ってか去る。」婆云く、「驀直に
さ そうわず ゆ さんごほ ばあい こう
し去れ。」僧纔かに行くこと三五步。婆云く、「好

[57] See: 神保如天. 《従容録通解》。東京：無我山房, 1915. Page 397 (Case 58).

[58] See Book of Serenity, case 10: 舉。臺山路上有一婆子凡有僧問。臺山路向什麼處去婆云。驀直去僧纔行婆云。好箇阿師又恁麼去也僧舉似趙州州云。待。與勘過州亦如前問至來日上堂云。我為汝勘破婆子了也。

箇の師僧、又た恁麼にし去る。」後に僧有りて州に
舉似す。州云く、「我去って爾が與に這の婆子を
勘過するを待て。」明日便ち去って亦た是の如く
問う、婆も亦た是の如く答う。州歸って衆に謂っ
て曰く、「台山の婆子、吾、爾が與に勘破し了れ
り。」

【E】

[As recounted by] Zhaozhou, a monk on a pilgrimage asked an old woman: "Which way is the road to Taishan?"[1] The old woman said, "Go straight ahead." As the monk continued a few steps, she said, "Another one of these great monks, going that way again." A monk reported this to Zhaozhou, and Zhaozhou said, "Wait until I go and investigate this old woman." He departed the next day, asked the same question, and the old woman gave the same answer. Zhaozhou then told his congregation: "I have investigated that old woman."

[1] "Taishan": See note 1 of the Chinese text.

The bright ones are keen on pointing out the futility of the pilgrim's long journey in search of the holy, as they know that what they are seeking is what they already possess, and that they set themselves on a quest to find what has always been all around them. What is bright can still always be outshone by another source of light. The most imposing of the stars are all thrown into darkness by the brilliance of the sun, which is close, but even our glorious star knows to dim its brightness, to let others shine and be seen, when the evening comes. Where should the pilgrim go? Straight ahead! A perfect answer, no matter what his destination is. The very body of most animals has indeed been patiently shaped by eons of evolution, giving it an orientation, breaking the marvelous symmetry of the sphere of the cell, origin and building block of life, to establish an up and a down, a front and a back. Man cannot soar in the sky or swim into the deep on his own, and he is thus condemned to always simply

go forward, where his eyes and his feet lead him. For the entirety of his life, he goes forward, always reaching his destination, but many will still feel the need for more direction, for guidance, being reassured by a benevolent soul standing on the path.

The good-hearted guide may point out the way with his walking staff, but he may also strike the pilgrim with the same hand, pointing out the futility of his journey, and his lack of clarity concerning the course of his own life. The commoner is easily disappointed by holy men, and he feels jubilation and pride in surpassing them in their understanding of holy matters, despite his condition, a life spent toiling for his daily sustenance rather than enjoying the possibility of engaging in spiritual practice. The way is yet sweet as honey and simple as a babe. Bitterness and cunning run contrary to it, and show a lack of vision of the nature of life, an attachment to the contrast between "you" and "I." The novice is naturally touched in his heart by the apparent acrimony of the guide, deriding him for his pilgrimage. Arriving at his destination, he feels compelled to ask if he has strayed from his path.

It is easy for the newcomer to be troubled, but the man of experience is like a massive boulder in a torrent of water, untroubled by the agitation around him, letting himself be eroded and carved by it. His mouth remains shut. He gives no answer. Hearing about this guide standing on the road, he does not believe in words and sets out on a weeks-long journey to see this person with his own eyes. Asking where his intended destination is, he obtains the same answer: straight ahead! And he is likewise sent off with the same bitterness and pride as the pilgrim. Meeting the latter, he simply acknowledges that he had the same experience as him. The pilgrim is now the one who is disappointed with the answer of the holy man, an answer which is a mere silence. He made such a long journey just to hear the same words that he reported to his host. What a waste of time! So it may appear, but the wise no longer counts his days upon the earth. Here or there, to walk or to stand still, it makes no difference, and therefore, time is never wasted. An occasion to teach another, to lead someone lost back to the right track, this is an excellent way to spend his days, and thus did he undertake this journey, even if it may at first be misunderstood.

The pilgrim may be disappointed by the silence of the holy man, but silence may, all the same, speak more clearly than the most eloquent words. By offering him a disappointing answer, the host snatches the staff in his hands and pokes him with it.[59] Why do you need an answer?

[59]See: Roloff, Dietrich. *Cong-Rong-Lu – Aufzeichnungen aus der Klause der Gelassenheit: Die 100 Kôan des Shôyôroku.* Windpferd Verlagsgesellschaft mbH, 2008. Page 54 : "Zhao-zhou packt sich den Mönch, drückt ihm fast die Kehle zu, und lässt ihn los, stößt ihn von sich weg; tötet ihn, gibt seinen Erwartungen den Todesstoß und stößt ihn zugleich ins Leben hinein und hinaus."

The answer you seek is within this silence. It is this silence, one that silences all questions and answers, and shatters the barrier between the holy and the profane.[60] To spend weeks walking just to hear what one has already heard before, to see something that can be seen anywhere, this is precisely what the pilgrim has done by coming to the holy place. The host, without a word, simply showed him what his journey represents. The destination is not where the answer is found, and now the pilgrim finally hears what the silence of the old man contains. His journey was not vain, because he now sees the holiness of his home and of every part of the earth. He clearly sees the way to go, always straight ahead, and wholeheartedly gives thanks for the priceless guidance he received.

Case 72 —Shoushan's Short Staff —首山竹篦

Source: The Gateless Barrier Case 43.

【中】

shǒu shān hé shàng niān zhú bì shì zhòng yún rǔ děng zhū rén ruò huàn
首山和尚拈竹篦[1]示眾云：「汝等諸人，若喚
zuò zhú bì zé chù bú huàn zuò zhú bì zé bèi rǔ zhū rén qiě dào
作竹篦則觸，[2]不喚作竹篦則背，[3]汝諸人且道：
huàn zuò shén me
喚作甚麼。」

[1] 【竹篦】 [zhú bì]: "a short bamboo staff." The second character literally means "comb," but the compound designates the flat bamboo teaching stick used in Zen.

[2] 【觸】 S:【触】 [chù] : Literally "[the sense of] touch." One of the "six dusts" (六塵), corresponding to the "six roots" (六根) or six sensory "organs" of the Buddhist tradition (the eyes, ears, nose, tongue, body, and mind). Here, it designates the fact of being caught in the mire of worldly illusions, as the result of an attachment to the flow of the senses.

[3] 【背】 [bēi]: "to turn one's back." Here, it means to turn one's back on the tangible reality of earthly things.

【日】

こ しゅざんおしょう しっぺい ねん しゅ しめ
擧す。首山和尚、竹篦を拈じて衆に示して
いわ なんじらしょにん も よ しっぺい な すなわ
云く、「汝等諸人、若し喚んで竹篦と作さば則ち

[60] See: Villalba, Dokusho. *Hekiganroku. Crónicas del Acantilado Azul.* Miraguano Ediciones. 1994. : "Se puede decir que hay dos clases de silencio: el que niega la palabra y el que lo afirma todo, incluida la palabra. El primero es el extremo opuesto de la contradicción palabra-silencio. El segundo es la resolución de esta contradicción."

ふ よ しっぺい な すなわ そむ なんじょにん
觸る、喚んで竹篦と作さざれば則ち背く。汝諸人、
しば い よ なん な
且らく道え、喚んで甚麼とか作さん。」

【E】

Shoushan held his short bamboo staff, showing it to the congregation, and said, "All of you! If you call this a short bamboo staff, you are caught [in the mire of worldly illusions]. If you do not call it a short bamboo staff, you turn your back [on its tangible, earthly nature]. Now, all of you, tell me: what would you call it?"

The mind violently rends the seamless celestial tapestry, the heavenly vault, into ten thousand pieces, in order to build a world made of discreet things. Unlike the whole of the earth and the skies, these pieces of the fabric of the universe can be seized, stacked, and transformed. Neat labels are stuck upon them, in the form of names and characteristics, and men can thereby evoke their presence by a mere mention of these words, considerably increasing the range of their power over things. Power over the world nonetheless does not amount to power over the earth and the skies, but man is easily deceived, and often fails to differentiate the sign from what it represents, and he mistakes the representations of the world for the tangibility of the earth.

If one holds a short bamboo staff in his hands, showing it to his fellows and asking what it is, what shall a truthful answer be? If they call it a short bamboo staff, this implies that they are incapable of seeing its true nature, as they reduce this seamless earth to a thing, with clear but arbitrary boundaries. A few qualities of this object are likewise arbitrarily selected out of countless possible others, all describing a facet of this thing. It is called a "staff" because of its shape and function, but it could just as well be called a "stick," a "lever," or a "wand." It is called a "bamboo staff," highlighting the origin of the material of which it is made, but this designation could have been more precise, mentioning a particular species of bamboo used for its crafting, or it may simply have been called a "corpse of a plant." To use a name, to employ the tools of the world, is to caricature the truth of nature, to offer a simplified vision of it, one that can be understood by man's simple mind. To say that it *is* a bamboo staff, that it is short or long, precious or cheap, beautiful or ugly, if one is convinced to thereby describe its truth, is to be caught in the mire of the delusions of the world, to play with toys, claiming to

master the real thing. The danger here does not lie in the use of names and language, but rather in the blindness to the nature of language itself, in the fact that one may easily mistake the things of the world for the earth and the skies themselves.

Without the incomparable power of the mind to cut out the fabric of nature into things, man would be the prey and servant of all animals. What elevates man above them is his unique ability to manipulate these things through language, bestowing names upon them, evoking and invoking their presence with a turn of the tongue or the stroke of a pen. Once he recognizes the imprecision and falsehood of calling it a "short bamboo staff," he may decide to embrace the lie, the absurdity of the world, and call it a "long rose," a "glass finger," or a "bronze hair." This would nonetheless be to turn one's back on the earthly nature of this object, to deny that the world indeed partially succeeds in grasping certain properties of the earth, the tangible reality of the objects and materials that surround us. Arbitrariness is at the heart of the world and its names, but this does not mean that its representations are not grounded in the earth. The foundation of man's world rests upon the earth, what can be felt with the senses, with few ambiguities and little room for interpretation. If our world says that 1+1=2, it is because we can see with our own eyes and verify with the touch of our hands that to be given one thing twice leaves one with two things, and because these signs are conventionally used to designate such a sensory experience. Truth and falsehood, arbitrariness and factuality, are deeply intertwined in our world, and the remarkable power of this realm certainly resides in this ambiguity. The mind's formidable plasticity, despite this fact, allows us to employ the tools of the world while keeping their limitations in sight, standing on the edge between earth and world, incomprehensible truth and understandable illusion, rejecting neither, abiding nowhere, joining every-thing and no-thing.

If the man keeps silent, and refrains from observing it with the eye of the world, as a thing, what will he see? He will see nothing, no-thing, only the entirety of the skies, the unadulterated and unmediated truth of nature. This vision of truth, however, leaves him powerless, and he can do nothing with it. He cannot share it with his brethren, nor can he engrave it in his memory. If he calls it a "short bamboo staff," he accomplishes nothing that any other man could do and simply states the obvious. One who casually walks on the razor-sharp edge between earth and world, language and silence, truth and illusion, will neither talk nor keep silent. He will speak with his flesh and silence the babbling of his brethren, swiftly raising his arm, vigorously striking each one of them, showing them what he holds in his hand, offering them unmediated contact with it, giving them a direct experience of its nature, in their very flesh, and they thereby find themselves touched by truth.

Case 73 —Luopu's Obedience —洛浦伏膺

Source: The Book of Serenity Case 35.

【中】

jǔ luò pǔ cān jiā shān bù lǐ bài dāng miàn ér lì shān
舉。洛浦 參夾山，不禮拜當面而立。山
yún jī qī fèng cháo fēi qí tóng lèi chū qù pǔ yún zì
云：「鷄棲[1] 鳳巢，非其同類，出去。」浦 云：「自
yuǎn qū fēng qǐ shī yì jiē shān yún mù qián wú shé lí
遠趨風，[2] 乞師一接。」山 云：「目前無闍梨，[3]
cǐ jiān wú lǎo sēng pǔ biàn hè shān yún zhù zhù qiě mò
此間[4] 無老僧。」浦 便喝。[5] 山 云：「住住且莫
cǎo cǎo cōng cōng yún yuè shì tóng xī shān gè yì jié duàn tiān xià rén shé
草草忽忽。雲月是同，溪[6] 山各異。截斷天下人舌
tóu jí bù wú zhēng jiào wú shé rén jiě yǔ pǔ wú yǔ shān biàn
頭。即不無爭教無舌人解語。」[7] 浦 無語，山 便
dǎ pǔ cóng cǐ fú yīng
打。浦 從此伏膺。[8]

[1] 【棲】 S:【栖】 [qī]: "to perch."

[2] 【趨風】 [qū fēng]: "to hurry, as if carried by the winds."

[3] 【闍梨】 S:【阇梨】 [shé lí]: "a Buddhist teacher." A transliteration of the Sanskrit word आचार्य [ācārya]. It may also be written 闍黎 .

[4] 【此間】 S:【此间】 [cǐ jiān]: "here" / "this place."

[5] 【喝】 [hè]: This word here represents the sound of a shout. In present-day China, during Zen practice, the character is generally not pronounced as the literal reading of the character, [hè], but more as a variation of 'Haa!' or 'Hat!' The meaning of such a shout, in the context of public cases, is largely open to interpretation, and left to the reader to interpret, as it often represents a key point of the public cases in which it appears. The character also usually means "to drink," but the second meaning, linked to the sound of a shout, is also well known. In English Zen texts, it is often known as a "Kaatz," the Japanese pronunciation of the same character, which is probably closer to the original pronunciation of this word in the Chinese language of the time than the current Mandarin pronunciation ([hè]), as shown by the reconstruction of the Old Chinese pronunciation of this word by the Chinese linguist Zhengzhang Shangfang 郑张尚芳): [/*qha:d/] (See: 郑张尚芳。《上古音系》。上海: 上海教育出版社。 2013. Page 350.). For the English translation, the Mandarin pronunciation has still been followed, for reasons of coherence, as all proper names are transliterated from modern Mandarin Chinese. The founder of the Linji school of Zen, Línjì Yìxuán (臨濟義玄), often used such shouts toward his disciples. The pronunciation itself is, even so, not of great importance. It will here be translated as "Haa!"

[6] 【溪】 [xī]: "a small mountain stream."

[7] 【解語】 S:【解语】 [jiě yǔ]: "to be able to speak."

[8] 【伏膺】 [fú yīng]: "to obey and serve someone with admiration."

【日】

こ らくうら かっさん さん らいはい めん
舉す。洛浦、夾山に參ず、禮拜せずして面に

向って立つ。山云く、「鶏鳳巣に棲む其の同類に非ず、出で去れ。」浦云く、「遠きより風に趨る、乞う師一接。」山云く、「目前に闇黎なく此間に老僧なし。」浦、便ち喝す。山云く、「住ね住ね且らく草草忽忽なること莫れ。雲月是れ同く溪山各異なり。天下人の舌頭を截斷することは即ち無きに非ず。爭でか無舌人をして解語せしめん。」浦、無語。山、便ち打つ。浦此れより伏庸す。

【E】

Luopu came to visit Jiashan and, without bowing, stood face-to-face with him. Jiashan said, “A chicken perches in a phoenix’s nest. This one is not of the same sort. Go away!” Luopu said, “I have come from far away, riding on the winds. I beg you, Master, offer me some guidance.” Jiashan said, “Before my eyes, there is no young master, and here, there is no old monk.” Luopu shouted: “Haa!”[1] Jiashan said, “Stop it, stop it. Don’t be so careless and hasty. The clouds and the moon are the same; The brooks in the valleys and the mountains are different from one another. One may cut off the tongues of the men living under the sky, but how would one make a tongueless man speak?” Luopu remained speechless, and Jiashan then hit him. From this moment on, Luopu started to obey Jiashan and to look up to him.

[1] “Haa!”: See note 5 of the Chinese text.

When we pay a visit to a man enjoying an elevated position in the world, we feel the pressure to demonstrate our respect for the rules of this world, before we even open our mouths. We bow as a mark of deference or offer a sign honoring the other. One who sees the falsehood of the world, a man without position, does not consider others in terms of

levels of inferiority or superiority, and thus may dispense with politeness, adopting the rudeness of the barbarian, the desert dweller, the one living far from civilization. In the city, there are the king and the slaves, the rich and the poor, the learned and the fool, but outside of these walls, where the mind is as clear as the azure sky and reason does not cut off the seamless heavenly vault into a myriad of pieces, the chicken cannot be distinguished from the phoenix, and the master appears no different from the novice.

The man of the desert for all that knows to follow the usage of the city when he ventures into it. To reside beyond the walls of the world does not imply that one despises the order established within it. The newcomer is often too zealous, hastily turning his back upon his past, too eager to welcome his future, impatient as he witnesses the unhurried turning of the heavenly wheels. He comes with the winds, guided by the sky itself, asking for things from someone who has no-thing to offer, showing his naivete. One who lets himself be guided by the winds will, however, always be led where he needs to be, and thus he is welcomed with open arms and with words of illumination. He is introduced to the great desert: "Before my eyes, there is no young master, and here, there is no old monk." In the place where there is no thing, its dwellers have no position. There are no palaces and wooden shacks, no lords nor servants, not even life and death! All live eternally there, and all are already dead, reclaimed by the insatiable ground. To describe it with words is still only to point out the way to go, rather than the destination he is meant to reach.

Venturing hastily into the great wasteland is unwise. It first demands maturity and clarity of mind. Thinking that he has exhausted the world and all words, the novice offers a deafening shout, intending to demonstrate that he also no longer needs the world, that he is now a man of the desert, having let go of all his earthly and worldly possessions. Laden with impatience, burdened with envy, the newcomer fails to see the yoke he attempts to carry beyond the walls of the world. Seeing that the clouds and the moon are a mere image, things above the earth that effortlessly pass through the sky each night, he genuinely believes that he can climb the mountains of the earth as easily as he goes down a valley by letting himself be carried by the flow of a river. Mastery over the world is different from control over the earth. Ideas and states of mind may be changed swiftly, with only the use of the will, but all the willpower of the world will not move mountains or carve out valleys. To live in the desert, one must first clearly see the nature of the world. To cease to rely on words, one must first learn to listen to what the tongueless man has to say. What he tells with silence encompasses more than all the volumes of all the libraries of the great city. What he has to say is only one thing, which is everything and no-thing, and he continuously tells

everyone about it, every single instant of his existence, with all his body, with all his being, being the perfect incarnation of this thing, a bright sun illuminating the desert, a revelation of absolute limpidity, waving his arms and his hands, shaking up the newcomers, pulling them out to the desert, bringing them in contact with the earth and the sky, showing them their own faces in the face of the midnight moon. They will finally let go of their burden, let go of themselves and of their world, to rejoice in the vastness of the place where there is only no-thing.

Case 74 —Yantou's Last Word —巖頭末后句

Source: The Blue Cliff Record Case 51.

【中】

jǔ xuě fēng zhù ān shí yǒu liǎng sēng lái lǐ bài fēng jiàn lái
舉。雪峯住庵時，有兩僧來禮拜。峯見來，
yǐ shǒu tuō ān mén fàng shēn chū yún shì shén me sēng yì yún shì
以手托庵門，[1] 放身出云：「是什麼。」僧亦云：「是
shén me fēng dī tóu guī ān sēng hòu dào yán tóu tóu wèn shén
什麼。」峯低頭[2] 歸庵。僧後到巖頭，頭問：「什
me chù lái sēng yún líng nán lái tóu yún céng dào xuě fēng
麼處來。」僧云：「嶺南來。」頭云：「曾到雪峯
ma sēng yún céng dào tóu yún yǒu hé yán jù sēng jǔ qián
麼。」僧云：「曾到。」頭云：「有何言句。」僧舉前
huà tóu yún tā dào shén me sēng yún tā wú yǔ dī tóu guī
話。頭云：「他道什麼。」僧云：「他無語，低頭歸
ān tóu yún yī wǒ dāng chū huǐ bú xiàng tā dào mò hòu jù ruò
庵。」頭云：「噫，我當初悔不向他道末後句，若
xiàng yī dào tiān xià rén bú nài xuě lǎo hé sēng zhì xià mò zài
向伊道，天下人不奈雪老何。」[3] 僧至夏末，再
jǔ qián huà qǐng yì tóu yún hé bù zǎo wèn sēng yún wèi
舉前話請益。[4] 頭云：「何不早問。」僧云：「未
gǎn róng yì tóu yún xuě fēng suī yǔ wǒ tóng tiáo shēng bù yǔ
敢容易。」頭云：「雪峯雖與我同條生，[5] 不與
wǒ tóng tiáo sī yào shí mò hòu jù zhī zhè shì
我同條死；要識末後句，只這是。」

[1] 【托庵門】 [tuō ān mén]: "to open the door of one's hermitage [by pushing it]."

[2] 【低頭】 S:【低头】 [dī tóu]: Literally, "to bow the head," but here means "to yield."

[3] 【不奈雪老何】 [bù nài xuě lǎo hé]: "[no one] could do anything to him"; 奈 [nài]: "to be subjected [to something]."

[4] 【請益】 S:【请益】 [qǐng yì]: "to ask [a teacher] to once again repeat or explain something."

[5] 【同條生】 [tóng tiáo shēng]: Literally “to be born on the same stem.”

【日】

舉す。雪峰住庵の時、兩僧有り、來たり禮拜す。峰、來たるを見て、手を以て庵門を托き、身を放って出でて云く、「是れ什麼ぞ。」僧も亦た云く、「是れ什麼ぞ。」峰、低頭て庵に歸る。僧、後に巖頭に到る。頭問う、「什麼處よりか來たる。」僧云く、「嶺南より來たる。」頭云く、「曾て雪峰に到るや。」僧云く、「曾て到る。」頭云く、「何の言句か有りし。」僧、前話を舉す。頭云く、「他は什麼とか道いし。」僧云く、「他は語無く、低頭て庵に歸れり。」頭云く、「噫、我當初悔ゆらくは他に末後の句を道わざりしことを。若し伊に道わば、天下の人、雪老を奈何ともせず。」僧、夏末に至り、再び前話を舉して請益す。頭云く、「何ぞ早く問わざる。」僧云く、「未だ敢て容易せず。」頭云く、「雪峰は我と同じ條に生ずと雖も、我と同じ條に死せず。末後の句を識らんと要せば、但だ這れ是なるのみ。」

【E】

When Xuefeng was living in a hermitage, two monks came to pay their respects. When Xuefeng saw them coming, he pushed the gate of his hermitage with his hands, got out, and said, “What is this?” The monks also said, “What is this?” Xuefeng hung his head and returned to his hermitage. Later,

the monks came to Yantou. Yantou asked them: "Where have you come from?" The monks said, "From Lingnan." Yantou said, "Did you ever visit Xuefeng?" The monks said, "Yes, we visited him." Yantou said, "What did he say?" The monks told him about the aforementioned dialogue. Yantou said, "What [else] did he say?" The monks said, "He did not say a word. He hung his head and returned inside his hermitage." Yantou said, "Ah, how I regret that at the time I did not tell him the last word! If I had told it to him, no one living under the sky would be able to do anything to him."[1] At the end of the summer, the monks once again mentioned the aforementioned conversation and asked him to explain its meaning. Yantou said, "Why didn't you ask me about it sooner?" The monk said, "We didn't dare to ask about it so casually." Yantou said, "Even though Xuefeng was born on the same stem as I,[2] he will yet not die on the same stem. If you want to know the last word, it is just this."

[1] "To do anything to him": See note 3 of the Chinese text.

[2] "The same stem": See note 5 of the Chinese text.

Fencing with dull swords, the combat may begin at dawn and end after dusk, but no one either wins or loses it, and no one sees his life being brought to an end. Watching this exhibition of skills, the spectator may then ask: "What is this?" and the answer will echo throughout the skies, as if it searched for the limit of "this," without ever exhausting it. It encompasses the most remote past and the most distant future, what is within the reach of our hands and what has yet to be touched by a ray of light, but who will understand what cannot be fathomed? Most will see it as an object, what lies beyond the threshold of their self, without realizing that the door separating the inside from the outside is flimsy and easily opened. It is a mere symbol, an enclosure allowing us to appear to retreat from the rest, so that we would be able to grasp it as an object, different from us. But when the door is wide open, we may finally see that the whole is a mirror reflecting itself. The visitor in front of me is my own reflection, and when I dare to ask him "What is this?", all I hear is the echo of my own voice. One may, all the same, be disappointed in oneself. One may also feign disappointment. Only he will know the reason, but when there is only one person, one single thing under the heavens, everyone knows it equally, and no one knows about

"it." To see someone coming back inside implies that one has yet to see "it." He never went out and never came back.

To be perplexed by the beholding of the truth of things is perfectly natural, but despite this fact, it is also an opportunity. Puzzled by what he sees, the newcomer thinks and seeks. His world is shaken, and parts of it crumble, exposing the faults of its foundations. His interrogation is then itself turned into a thing of the world, put into words, carried by the winds to the ears of men who once were also puzzled in the same manner. Expecting to obtain an answer dispelling the mystery, clarifying the darkness, he, all the same, only gets a more perplexing series of words: "I wish I had told him the last word." Who is going to tell whom this last word? When it is uttered, there will not be anyone under the heavens who will be there to hear it. The last word is the last thing of the world, the result of the great collapse of this world, when the stars come together, interlaced with the sun and the moon to form a piece of fabric covering the entire celestial vault; when the mountain ranges throw themselves into the ocean, with all living beings merging their flesh to form a perfect sphere, the earth becoming a single thing, smooth, without up and down, east or west, an indistinguishable whole named "earth." Then, when the sky itself crashes down upon the earth, like a passionate encounter between two lovers fusing their bodies to engender a new being, the last thing is then born, which is identical to the first thing, what *was* at the primordial dawn of the world. The only thing that remains is the first and the last, whose name is also the first and the last word, the cornerstone of the world, the only block left standing when all has crumbled to the ground. The word is what first traces a line between here and there, the inside and the outside, the self and the other. It is the sharpest sword cutting out the fabric of the heavens: "this." The whole of being is gathered with the first utterance of this word, and dissolved when it is finally abandoned, thrown into no-thing-ness.

Case 75 —How Would One Speak (I) —作么生道（一）

Source: The Blue Cliff Record Case 70.

【中】

jǔ guī shān wǔ fēng yún yán tóng shì lì bǎi zhàng bǎi zhàng
舉。溈山，五峯，雲巖，同侍立百丈。百丈
wèn guī shān bìng què yān hóu chún wěn zuò me shēng dào guī shān
問溈山：「併却咽喉唇吻，作麼生道。」溈山
yún què qīng hé shàng dào zhàng yún wǒ bù cí xiàng rǔ dào kǒng
云：「却請和尚道。」丈云：「我不辭向汝道，恐

yǐ hòu sàng wǒ ér sūn
已後喪我兒孫。」

【日】

こ いさん ごほう うんがん とも ひゃくじょう じりょう ひゃく
擧す。溈山、五峰、雲巖、同に百丈に侍立す。百
じょう いさん と のど くち ふさ いかな
丈、溈山に問う、「咽喉と唇吻を併却いで、作麼生か
い いさん いわ かえ こ おしょう い
道わん。」溈山云く、「却って請う、和尚道え。」
じょういわ われ なんじ い じ いごわ
丈云く、「我は汝に道うを辞せざるも、已後我が
じそん うしな おそれ
兒孫を喪わんことを恐る。」

【E】

Guishan, Wufeng, and Yunyan were all attending upon Baizhang. Baizhang asked Guishan: “With both one’s lips and throat closed, how would one speak?” Guishan said, “I would rather ask the Master to tell me.” Baizhang said, “I would not refuse to tell you, but if I do it, I fear I would lose my descendants.”

The world is a vast ocean of words and characters, and man desperately or eagerly wades through it in search of meaning or pleasure. The air is almost continually stirred up by the lips and the throats of the living, with invisible waves reaching our ears to bring us sounds and speech. What this enormous mass of meaningful bits of language provides is an increased familiarity with this world in which language itself is contained, knowledge of what can be put into words and characters. In order to transmit one’s personal vision of what lies beyond the boundaries of this world, the truth of the earth and the skies, one yet needs to devise a new manner of communicating, forging signs that are not mere words and characters. Meaning needs to be transmitted without employing speech or writing, as these are replete with lofty ideas, without ground. One must rather use signs that are as close as possible to the earth, meaningful expressions that are tightly intertwined with a direct experience, one intimately felt in one’s flesh and bones, seen with the eyes, leaving no place to doubt of the experience itself, but still

leaving ample space for interpretation, refraining from explicitly stating its meaning. A slap in the face may speak louder and clearer than a long tirade shouted at someone. A slight movement of the hand may transmit more than a thousand volumes, incarnating a truth that cannot be accurately described with words. When one has seen his true nature, the essence of the heavens themselves, the interstice between the blocks of meaning forming our world, he is far from powerless to help others share his vision. He can give a hand, to pull up or push down, to embrace or to strike, shaking the disciple to his core, blurring the image of his world, disturbing the order to which he is familiar, thereby showing him that the rigid walls of his home hide something grander than his world. He just needs to let go of them, and they will crumble, revealing the light they for so long concealed. Another kind of teaching is for all that required to discover another kind of existence. A transmission without words and characters, directly from heart to heart, from the earth to the mind, outside of the tradition and the scriptures.[61]

There is nothing to teach but no-thing-ness, and no-thing-ness is not something to be taught. No-thing-ness may, however, be heard and be seen, and it may speak and manifest itself within man's world. One who has let go of his self becomes an instrument, a voice and a body through which such manifestation occurs, without reflection, without a shred of thought, all flowing naturally through his mouth, with the winds softly but steadily guiding his steps and his hands. His mouth may appear voluble, his throat like a torrent of air, but he does not utter a single word, and he does not *mean* anything. He agitates the air engulfing the world, emitting sound-waves speedily propagated through the sky, one with the gigantic cyclone caused by the revolutions of the greatest celestial wheels, and these winds come and go through his mind, where there is no-thing.[62] The dwellers of the world hear these sounds as a teaching, as words, part of their language, inviting and guiding them. The knavish disciple still fails to see that he and his interlocutor are dwelling in different realms, and he therefore plays with the words, because that is all he can hear. Inattentive, he neither reads between the lines, nor hears the silence between the words uttered, yet there he

[61] A sentence based on the famous saying traditionally attributed to Bodhidharma, symbolizing the essence of the Zen practice, and associated with the "Essay Concerning Awakening" (悟性論). In Chinese, this sentence is: 「直指人心，見性成佛，教外別傳，不立文字。」.

[62] See: Yamada, Kou'un, *Hekiganroku (Blue Cliff Record)* [Unpublished manuscript]: "When we speak, our mouth is moving, to be sure. But from the standpoint of the essential, the world of emptiness, the mouth does not move a fraction of an inch. How can there be any movement when there is nothing at all that can move?" Original Japanese: 『元に戻って「口を開かずに喋ってみろ」という。喋るときには肉体の口が動いていることは間違いありません。だが何もないという側から見ると微動だもしておりません。もともと何もないから動くものがないのですから、その世界からみないと、この公案は解りません。』From: 山田耕雲。《碧岩集提唱山田耕雲》。[Unpublished manuscript].

may find his true nature, the passage to escape the grip of the world, the doorway to no-thing-ness. Eager for more words, the foolish disciple only narrows the gap between words and characters, reducing his chances of seeing what lies in between, or rather what is not there, no-thing.

Case 76 —How Would One Speak (II) —作么生道（二）

Source: The Blue Cliff Record Case 71.

【中】

jǔ bǎi zhàng fù wèn wū fēng bìng què yān hóu chún wěn zuò me
舉。百丈 復問 五峯：「併却咽喉唇吻，作麼
shēng dào fēng yún hé shàng yě xū bìng què zhàng yún wú rén
生道。」峯 云：「和尚也須併却。」丈 云：「無人
chù zhuó é wàng rǔ
處斫額望[1] 汝。」

[1]【斫額望】[zhuó é wàng]: "to place one's hand on one's forehead and look at something far away."

【日】

こ ひゃくじょう ま ごほう と のど くち
舉す。百丈、復た五峰に問う、「咽喉と唇吻と
ふさ さもさん い ほういわ おしょう
を併却いで、作麼生か道う。」峰云く、「和尚も
ま すべか ふさ じょういわ ひと な ところ しゃく
也た須らく併却ぐべし。」丈云く、「人無き處に斫
がく なんじ のぞ
額して汝を望まん。」

【E】

Baizhang once again asked Wufeng: "With both one's lips and throat closed, how would one speak?" Wufeng said, "The Master should also keep them closed." Baizhang said, "At that place where there is no one, I will shade my eyes with my hand and gaze at you from far away."

Like a parent attempting to patiently instruct an unruly toddler, incapable of understanding the benevolence of his progenitor and the necessity of such learning, the immature follower, when seeing the finger of the master pointing at the edges of the world, then sees in it a sword directed to his heart, and the opportunity of a duel. Unsheathing his own weapon, he is ready to demonstrate his modest fencing skills, ready to slash the opponent and kill, failing to realize that he is likely to lose his life in the process. Young and witty, he strikes without afterthought, cutting off the finger in a gracious and rapid movement, and satisfied with his apparent prowess, he stands proudly in front of his opponent, thinking that his defeat is clear, but he is utterly blind to his own predicament, and fails to see that he only hurt himself by cutting off the finger rather than observe where it pointed.

Talking about silence is no easy task. Preaching no-thing-ness is a feat worthy of being heard. Unfortunately, it is equally hard to find an ear worthy to receive such teaching. The words may be heard, their meaning may be understood, and yet a man may find himself completely oblivious to the destination to which these words were made to guide him. One may keep silent to talk about silence, and do nothing to demonstrate the nature of nothingness, but only someone already familiar with nothingness would be able to perceive it, and a man in nothingness perceives no-thing. Without sparing any effort, the man who has climbed to the solitary peak and contemplated the extent of the skies, far above the smog of the world, descends to help those who have yet to make this life-changing ascent. He sacrifices himself because he has no need for his self. He therefore soils his own mouth by uttering obnoxious words about silence, by depicting no-thing-ness with the brushes and colors of the world. Glad to see such a man wade through the mud and cover his flesh with filth, a member of his audience is quick to laugh at him, pointing out the hubris of his undertaking, the absurdity of his attempt at putting silence into words and depicting no-thing-ness: "You should keep your mouth closed, and your throat shut!" This wit and energy are still preferable to mere puzzling and incomprehension. This will to fight, to engage in a battle with the words of the master, is an immature and yet encouraging reaction, showing that one does not take the things of the world too seriously. It demonstrates an attachment to the self, a desire of the "I" to overcome the "you," but it also shows that one sees through the contradictions of the world, the weaknesses of its foundations, a first step toward its demolition and liberation from this golden cage.

To see a winner and a loser, a conqueror and a vanquished, implies that one has yet to hear the words that are spoken with the lips shut and the throat closed. The master shades his eyes with his hands to see the horizon of the place where there is no one, and he respectfully

gazes upon the disciple from afar, his lofty abode near the radiance of the sun. In the great desert where there is no one and no thing, the smallest gap is nonetheless as great as the breadth of the earth and the skies. There, there is no novice or master, close or far, right or wrong, and thus this fencing match leaves no one standing. The certainties of the world disappear there, like a puff of smoke in a gust of wind. The only opponent is oneself, and once his heart has been pierced through and through, then silence reigns over the great plain, but the air is still replete with echoes of the truth of nature, transparent waves stirred up by the sky itself, which run in search for ears so that they would be heard and listened to, bouncing in the angular streets of the cluttered cities lying beyond the land where there is no one and no thing, a calling inviting the living to close their lips and open up their ears and eyes to the truth into which they are thrown, and incarnate themselves.

Case 77 —How Would One Speak (III) —作么生道（三）

Source: The Blue Cliff Record Case 72.

【中】

jǔ bǎi zhàng yòu wèn yún yán bìng què yān hóu chún wěn zuò me
舉。百丈 又問 雲巖：「併却咽喉唇吻，作麼
shēng dào yán yún hé shàng yǒu yě wèi zhàng yún sàng wǒ ér
生道。」巖 云：「和尚有也未。」丈 云：「喪我兒
sūn
孫。」

【日】

こ ひゃくじょうま うんがん と のど くち
舉す。百丈又た雲巖に問う、「咽喉と唇吻とを
ふさ さもさん い がんいわ おしょう あ
併却いで、作麼生か道う。」巖云く、「和尚有り
や じょういわ わ じそん も
也未。」丈云く、「我が兒孫を喪えり。」

【E】

Baizhang said to Yunyan: “With both one’s lips and throat closed, how would one speak?” Yunyan said, “Could the Master also do it, or not?” Baizhang said, “I will now lose my descendants.”

If a man shouts in a deserted canyon, he would not be surprised to hear only the echo of his own voice. Inquiring about the way silence speaks, he will surely be invited to let silence reply instead of flooding the air with words. The echo reverberates upon the walls of the world, and his own words are thrown back at him, like a dagger bouncing on its target, hitting the one who threw it. The world failed to understand this voice of the desert pleading for silence. It saw a weapon of war in the words of the stranger to the world, not seeing that it was rather the scalpel of a surgeon, attempting to precisely incise a growth suffocating and blinding the afflicted of the world, so that they would finally behold their true face. The blade strikes back at its sender, but the one who abides where there is no life or death cannot be hurt by such means. He will try, again and again, to allow the poor prisoners of the world to witness the wondrous truth, their common nature, never lacking patience, never exhausting his good-will, as for him the depths of time are no different from the blinking of an eye, and he does not value his own existence more than that of a single ear of wheat patiently growing in the blazing summer sun before it feels the cold and deadly embrace of the sharpened scythe.

Alone in the great valley between the world and the desert, the instrument of the way still waits for an encounter. He tirelessly sows seeds deep into the ground of the city, in the hope of turning it into a luxuriant forest, but has yet to see a single seedling sprout from the soil. His words are heeded by no one, and he has yet to find a worthy heir to whom he would entrust the way to no-thing-ness and the responsibility to guide others to it. This fact nonetheless does not plunge him into despair, nor does it weaken his resoluteness, for he knows that life itself is but a gigantic tree rooted in the earth, extending its crooked arms into the sky, higher and higher with each passing year. He does not lament the withering of a little shoot or the breaking of a twig. He does not cry over fallen leaves, nor is he angered by the absence of fruits during a few summers. Indeed, he knows all too well that the tree itself will one day reach its destiny. The living will sooner or later listen to silence, understanding its speech, reading between the lines, and deciphering the blank space between the characters. They will write upon the firmament with their tongue, and speak volumes with their eyes. It is of no consequence whether some arrive before others, as there is no one at their destination, only an all-encompassing whole, and not a single thing to which it could be opposed. There, caught in the gigantic whirlwind of the heavens, there is neither speech nor silence, but only silent speech, the speaking of silence, with no separation between both, and no parent nor children, only a continuous chain joining the most distant past and the most remote future, as *presence*.

Case 78 —Yaoshan Ascends the Rostrum —藥山陞座

Source: The Book of Serenity Case 7.

【中】

jǔ yào shān jiǔ bù shēng zuò yuàn zhǔ bái yún dà zhòng jiǔ sī shì
舉。藥山 久不陞座院主白云[1] ：「大眾久思示
huì qīng hé shàng wèi zhòng shuō fǎ shān lìng dǎ zhōng zhòng fāng jí shān
誨。[2] 請和尚為眾說法。」山 令打鐘。眾方集山
shēng zuò liáng jiǔ biàn xià zuò guī fāng zhàng zhǔ suí hòu wèn hé shàng shì lái xǔ
陞座良久便下座歸方丈，主隨後問：「和尚適來許
wèi zhòng shuō fǎ yún hé bù chuí yì yán shān yún jīng yǒu jīng
為眾說法。」云：「何不垂一言。」山 云：「經有經
shī lùn yǒu lùn shī zhēng guài dé lǎo sēng
師，論有論師。[3] 爭怪得老僧。」

[1] 【白云】 [bái yún]: “to say [something] so that one would understand.”

[2] 【示誨】 S:【示诲】 [shì huì]: “to instruct.”

[3] 【論師】 S:【论师】 [lùn shī]: A monk who is well-versed in scholastic Buddhist philosophical treatises known as Shastras.

【日】

こ やく さん ひさ しん ざ いんじゅ もう
舉す。藥山久しく陞座せず。院主白して
いわ だいしゅ ひさ じ け おも こ おしょうしゅ
曰く、「大衆久しく示誨を思う、請う和尚衆の
ため せっぽう さん しょう た しゅまさ あつま
爲に說法せよ。」山、鐘を打せしむ。衆方に集る。
さん しん ざ りょうきゅうすなわ げざ ほうじょう かえ じゅ のち
山、陞座良久、便ち下座して方丈に歸る。主、後に
したが と おしょうてきらいしゅ ため せっぽう
隨って問う、「和尚適來衆の爲に說法せんことを
ゆる いかん いちごん た さんいわ きょう
許す、云何ぞ一言を垂れざる。」山云く、「經に
きょうじ あ ろん ろんじ あ いか ろうそう あやし え
經師有り論に論師有り、爭でか老僧を怪み得ん。」

【E】

It had been a long time since Yaoshan ascended the rostrum. The temple steward pointed this out to him, saying: “The congregation has been hoping for instruction for a long

time. Please, Master, give the congregation a talk about the Dharma." Yaoshan then had someone ring the bell. The congregation assembled. Yaoshan ascended the rostrum, sat there for a good while, and then he descended and returned to his room. The temple steward followed him and asked: "The master had just said that he would give the congregation a talk about the Dharma. Why didn't he utter a single word?" Yaoshan said, "For Sutras, there are Sutra specialists; for Shastras, there are Shastra[1] specialists. Why are you puzzled by this old monk?"

[1] "Shastra": See note 3 of the Chinese text.

There are times when silence speaks more than words, and when to come empty-handed is the greatest gift that one could offer. If something is continually present, men quickly grow accustomed to it, and its precious nature is soon forgotten, before it finally becomes invisible. As the darkness of the night kindles a longing for the glorious return of the dawn, the unveiling of the radiant face of the sun, or as long days of thirst, walking in an arid wasteland in the torrid summer heat, causes the one afflicted by it to see the presence of a patch of luxuriant vegetation in a new light, a small oasis, where a mere glass of water appears more precious than a cup made of pure gold, a prolonged silence can likewise teach the value of a few simple words more effectively than an entire lecture.[63]

A master may cease to teach with words and decide to teach by refraining from teaching, shutting his mouth, doing nothing. Assembling his community as is customary, he ascends to his preaching seat and commands that the bell be rung, with the ears of his audience wide open, the disciples now eagerly waiting to receive his words of wisdom. But all that can be heard is the fading of the sound of the bell, with no one able to tell when it stops. The master's mouth remains sealed, and silence reigns over the hall. The instruction has yet already begun.

By gathering his community, diverting its members from their daily duties and the affairs of the world and plunging them into absolute

[63] See the comment of Huanglong Huinan (黃龍慧南) found in the text of this case: "The people of our time easily take the Dharma lightly. I would like to be like a farmer, who from time to time lets it be parched, causing it to wither and thirst. Then, when water is poured on it, it flourishes." Original Chinese: 「蓋今之人。容易輕法者眾。欲如田夫時時乾之。令其枯渴。然後溉灌方得秀實也。」 From: 《萬松老人評唱天童覺和尚頌古從容庵錄》。 CBETA (Case 7).

silence, inviting them to idleness, the master opens up a space. He shapes the living into an empty vessel, ready to receive a libation, to be filled with something poured out from above. More than ever, they crave speech and are hungry for words, ready to devour them, but these do not come. Some are simply puzzled by this waiting, feeling oppressed by this silence, as it amplifies the reverberation of their own thoughts, some of which they wish would go away. Others may, all the same, be more perspicacious and begin to understand the teachings that they are now generously offered. What better means is there to teach about what cannot be put into words than silence itself?[64] This is one thing, but this silence is an inexhaustible well out of which an entire ocean may be drawn. It shows them their uncontrollable greed for words and their excessive reliance upon the arbitrary constructs of their world. Not listening to another man speaking, they are given the chance to hear their inner voice and to see where they stand. Robbed of their involvement in the affairs of the world, forced into a moment of idleness, they are shown that the most useful may arise from what appears the most useless. Doing nothing, hearing nothing, they are taught more intensely than ever before, and if properly hearkened to, the subtle teaching of silence will remain with them until their last breath. Then, they will hear the preaching of the birds and the prayers of the winds. The bees will be their master, and they will follow the ants to learn some of their wisdom. The hearing of a single word will enduringly satiate their hunger for knowledge, and in a moment of silence, they will receive the teaching of a lifetime. Looking at the interstice between the characters of a manuscript, they will perceive the infinity of the skies, and heeding the silence between words, they will feel the extent of the entirety of time itself.

Case 79 —Meeting on the Road Someone Acquainted with the Way 一路逢達道

Source: The Gateless Barrier Case 36.

【中】

wǔ zǔ yuē lù féng dá dào rén bù jiāng yǔ mò duì qiě dào jiāng shén me duì

五祖曰：「路逢達道人，[1] 不將語默對，且道：將甚麼對。」

[64]See: Roloff, Dietrich. *Cong-Rong-Lu – Aufzeichnungen aus der Klause der Gelassenheit: Die 100 Kôan des Shôyôroku.* Windpferd Verlagsgesellschaft mbH, 2008. : "Wittgensteins: 'Wovon man nicht sprechen kann, darüber muss man schweigen."

[1] 【達道】S:【达道】[dá dào]: “to be well-acquainted with the way” / “to have reached the way.”

【日】

舉(こ)す。五祖曰(ごそいわ)く、「路(みち)に達道(たつどう)の人(ひと)に逢(あ)わば、語(ご)默(もく)を將(も)って對(たい)せず。且(しば)らく道(い)え、甚麼(なに)を將(も)ってか對(たい)せん。」

【E】

Wuzu said, “When on the road one meets a man keenly acquainted with the Way, he can neither face him with words nor remain silent. How will he face him?”

The way of the sky ineluctably carries all that *is* on the course of its destiny, no matter whether the living are aware of it or not, or whether they embrace or attempt to oppose it. A man keenly acquainted with the way is someone who sees this current carrying him through time and space, through the heavens, seeing through the walls of things formed by the world of men, beholding the extent of the skies and seeing them as no-thing-ness, the turbulent whirlwind that has no parts, no beginning or end.

To face a man keenly acquainted with the way is to face the heavens themselves. How would one greet the blazing face of the sun, or the pale arms of our immense galaxy, covering the celestial vault? No words would be fitting, and even a contact with the holiest scripture would stain his body. Silence, if it is merely the absence of words, is no more appropriate, as most things of the world are also greeted with silence, especially the most neglected ones. One should therefore welcome such a man without words or silence. One manner of doing so would be to express an intention with one’s own body, such as an embrace or a slap on the face, an act that would bypass the world to express a bond upon the bare earth, something that is felt with the skin and seen with the eyes, without a hint of reflection or a syllable uttered.[65] Walking on the

[65] See Wumen’s verse on this case: “When on the road one meets a man keenly acquainted with the Way, he can neither face him with words nor remain silent. A fist hitting right on the cheek! If one understands, he does so right away.” Chinese original: 「路逢達道人不將語默對攔腮劈面拳直下會便會」, From: 《禪宗無門關》。CBETA (Case 36).

edge between earth and world, one may hope to be noticed, showing that one has perceived the truth of the world, its nature as a rampart veiling the nature of the way. This, however, would only be a demonstration of one's ignorance of the way of the sky.

The way is no-thing-ness, and no-thing-ness is the way. To be acquainted with the way of the sky is to realize that *he* is the way. It is a headlong plunge into no-thing-ness, without return, leaving behind every single thing, including his own body and his own self. A man of the world may perchance stumble upon such a man, but this man will not see the onlooker observing him. He will only see the way in his eyes, on his skin. He will hear its melodious sound in his voice and feel its substance while shaking his hand. To properly greet such a man implies being of one mind with him, that is, to have no mind. One must come empty-handed, not carrying a single thing over his shoulders or in his thoughts. Even the distinction between speech and silence must be left behind to appreciate the nature of the one facing him. A mirror facing a mirror, in which only the whole of the heavens is visible, this is how it looks when one meets a man of the way on the road of his life.

The man who has nothing will nonetheless not overlook the one who needs a helpful hand on the road. He offers this no-thing-ness to those bearing the world on their shoulders. The way itself may speak through his mouth and guide his steps, leading him to point out the way to go, and the nature of one's predicament, if he is still an obedient and ignorant slave of the world, a blind servant of his own self, burdened with a million things. Looking at such fellows, the man of the way sees their destiny, their destination, which is, sooner or later, no-thing-ness itself.

Case 80 —The Sutra of Perfect Enlightenment's Four Sentences —覺經四節

Source: The Book of Serenity Case 45.

【中】

jǔ yuán jué jīng yún jū yí qiè shí bù qī wàng niàn yú
舉。《圓覺經》云：「居[1] 一切時不起妄念。於
zhū wàng xīn yì bù xī miè zhù wàng xiǎng jìng bù jiā liǎo zhī yú wú liǎo zhī bú
諸妄心亦不息滅。住妄想境不加了知。於無了知不
biàn zhēn shí
辨[2] 真實。」

[1] 【居】 [jū]: "to be [somewhere]" / "to exist" / "to abide."

[2] 【辨】 [biàn]: "to distinguish."

【日】

挙す。圓覺經に云く、「一切時に居して妄念を起さず、諸の妄心に於いて亦息滅せず。妄念の境に住して了知を加えず、了知無きに於いて眞實を辨ぜず。」

【E】

The Sutra of Perfect Enlightenment says: “At all times, one should not cause delusive thoughts to emerge. When delusive thoughts have arisen in the mind, one does not extinguish them. Abiding in the realm of delusion, one does not gain knowledge, and when one has no knowledge, one does not distinguish the truth.”

Our world is replete with illusions. It has been built upon firm ground, the great body of the earth itself, but as its dwellers reached increasingly higher ground thanks to the efforts of their industrious predecessors, as well as their own, they progressively began to lose contact with the earth, surrounded from all parts by the products of their labor. Enshrouded in the alluring illusions of the world every day of his life, these illusions get a firm grip on man’s mind and give birth to delusions. He begins to think that his creations or those of his parents represent the truth of the earth and the sky, and that his mastery over this world gives him control over his destiny. Often unbeknownst to him, these delusions, and the whole of his world, are mere fruits of his mind. If he does not foster their growth, these delusions will nonetheless not sprout in front of him and seize his throat. The surest way to avoid being ensnared in such a manner is to unburden one’s mind, to release the desire to climb up to the stratosphere of the world, eagerly seeking knowledge, unrestrainedly building up new, higher abodes where one would live a life of seclusion, severed from the crudeness of the earth and the sky. When desire is quenched, the heart is at peace, and delusions vanish like the early morning fog encountering the fiery rays of the summer sun.

Peace is but a transient state. Thoughts almost ineluctably emerge from nothingness, and delusions sprout from these thoughts. Delusions feed on resistance, as opposition fosters the gushing out of a torrent

of new thoughts, as one strives to extinguish the fire by diverting a river of oil toward it. Simply ignored, by turning one's attention toward no-thing-ness itself, away from the world and its things, such fire quickly dies out. Doing nothing, nothing is thought about, and no-thing-ness begins to appear as the walls of the world begin to crumble under their own weight.

The mind of no-mind, the thoughtless heart in which there is no-thing, is then born when one ceases to be a dweller of the world, to be a nomad in the land of absolute absence, the great desert where one cannot distinguish winter from summer, night from day. A true wanderer, he does not abide there. He abides nowhere, and it is through this permanent exile and fleetingness, this abandoning of certainty and the absolute, that he is born anew, finally seeing his true face, the one he had before he was first born into the world.[66] The subtle wisdom that comes from the wandering transforms one's existence more profoundly than the towers of ink and paper found at the center of the greatest cities of the world. The knowledge of the one who has no-thing indeed cannot be taken from him, nor can it be forgotten. Surrounded by truth at all times, even seeing the truth of the things of the world, one no longer needs to distinguish truth from falsehood, the earth from the world, as he limpidly sees that they share the same nature, no-thing-ness itself.

One should nonetheless always question why he is tempted to read about what cannot be put into words. Offered a piece of holy scripture, the wanderer will not abide by its meaning. He does not reject nor embrace it, treating it as a tumbleweed passing before his eyes, brought by the torrid summer winds that carry it away from his sight as swiftly as they caused it to cross his path. He sees the truth of these words, as he sees the truth of the paper upon which they are inscribed. As holy as the clouds passing over his head, or the mud under his feet, they are heeded, but not dwelt upon.

Case 81 —Fayan's Substance and Name — 法眼質名

Source: The Book of Serenity Case 74.

【中】

jǔ sēng wèn fǎ yǎn chéng jiào yǒu yán cóng wú zhù běn lì yí qiè
舉。僧問法眼：「承教有言：『從無住本立一切

[66] Cf. the question uttered by Huineng to Ming concerning one's true face in the "Platform Sutra": 李中華, 丁敏. 《新譯六祖壇經》。台北：三民書局, 2007. Page 27: 「不思善，不思惡，正與麼時，那個是明上座本來面目?」

fǎ rú hé shì wú zhù běn yǎn yún xíng xīng wèi zhì míng
法[1]。』如何是無住本。」眼云：「形興未質，名
qǐ wèi míng
起未名。」

[1]【從無住本立一切法】[cóng wú zhù běn lì yí qiè fǎ]: A quote from the "Vimalakirti Sutra" (維摩経).

[2]【形興未質, 名起未名】[xíng xīng wèi zhì , míng qǐ wèi míng]: A sentence quoted from the "Treasure Theory" (寶藏論), a work traditionally attributed to the Buddhist philosopher of the Later Qin dynasty named Sēng Zhào (僧肇, 384–414).

【日】

こ そう ほうげん と うけたまわきょう い
擧す。僧、法眼に問う、「承る教に言えること
あ むじゅう もと いっさい ほう りつ いか
と有り無住の本より一切の法を立すと、如何なる
こ むじゅう もと めいわ かたち みしつ おこ
か是れ無住の本。」眼云く、「形は未質より興り、
な みめい おこ
名は未名より起る。」

【E】

A monk asked Fayan: "I have been taught that: 'From the basis of non-abiding, all things are established.'[1] What is this 'basis of non-abiding'?" Fayan said, "A form arises from what has no substance yet; a name comes from what has no name yet."[2]

[1] "From the basis of non-abiding, all things are established": See note 1 of the Chinese text.

[2] "A form arises from what has no substance yet; a name comes from what has no name yet": See note 2 of the Chinese text.

If one is taught that he should not let his mind abide in a specific location, that is, not let his thought become calcified, rigid, to instead embrace a constant state of indeterminacy, unrestrainedly letting go of all things so that everything and no-thing may be perceived, will he not face a paradox? To accept such a teaching without reserve would indeed be a form of abiding, thereby contradicting its very purpose. Fortunately, awareness of this fact is key to a genuine understanding of this teaching,

as a letting go of all things, even the teaching itself, and of even no-thing-ness itself, which is the foundation of all things.

Man's world is an astounding creation, like a tall flower standing in the midst of a vast, barren wasteland, whose presence appears highly incongruous, and whose origin is shrouded in mystery. It is also a great city made of countless building blocks assembled by innumerable, industrious hands over many generations. Each one of these building blocks, these "things" of the world, came to be as the result of an act of creation, when the soil was watered, and a unique shape bestowed upon the mud, a shape endowed with a meaning and a use. Without a continuous motion of the mind and the body, the world would soon cease to grow and swiftly crumble under its own weight. The world around us, with its giant skyscrapers made of concrete and its underground tunnels, its plastic trinkets and its pieces of machinery made of forged steel, is in its essence made of the same substance as the rest of nature, including life and our very flesh. Even our ideas are manifested as waves in the air, the motion of earthly matter floating over the ground, as characters inscribed on paper, or as a series of impulses within our brain. The mind and the limbs are caught in a race, with people often oblivious to the nature of the force that moves them. They fail to see the world as arising from the earth and resting upon it. They are equally unable to see the ground of the earth, the basis of all things. Seen directly, without the mediation of the world, without observing it through the prism of the millions of things formed by our hands and minds, the earth is indeed mere quicksand, something that cannot be grasped and cannot support anything steadily.

The ground of the earth, the ultimate foundation of our world, is no-thing-ness itself, a sandstorm formed and set in motion by the heavens themselves. Out of no-thing-ness, the things of the world emerge through the agency of the mind and the hands of man. He then begins to see no-thing-ness itself as a thing, the whole of the skies and the earth within these heavens, and then forms individual things out of this whole. Continually thinking, his mind also assigns names to all these things that he forms out of the whole, completing their creation, making them true things of the world, which can be evoked and invoked by the mere mention of their name. This wondrous work of art, collectively created by all animals, men in particular, nonetheless does not fundamentally transform the essence of what has been formed. The world remains based on no-thing-ness, and is no-thing-ness itself. All things emerge from it but also remain part of it. Their truth can only be seen outside of this world, when the parts vanish and leave only the whole in their stead, before this whole itself ceases to be perceived as a thing, and its nature shines in all its glory. Then, the truth is finally unveiled, and there is no longer any world to be seen, any earth or sky, but only raw

being, unadulterated and unmediated, without any certainty, without any abiding, as there is nothing that can abide somewhere, and nowhere where one could abide.

Case 82 —Juzhi Raises His Finger —俱胝竪指

Source: The Gateless Barrier Case 3.

A less complete version can be found in the Blue Cliff Record, case 19, and the Book of Serenity, case 84. [67]

【中】

jù zhī hé shàng fán yǒu jié wèn wéi jǔ yì zhī hòu yǒu tóng zī
俱胝 和尚凡有詰問，[1] 唯舉一指。後有童子，
yīn wài rén wèn hé shàng shuō hé fǎ yào tóng zī yì shù zhī tóu zhī
因外人問：「和尚說何法要。」[2] 童子亦竪指頭。胝
wén suì yī rèn duàn qí zhī tóng zī fù tòng háo kū ér qù zhī fù zhào
聞，遂以刃斷其指，童子負痛號哭而去。胝 復召
zhī tóng zī huí shǒu zhī què shù qī zhī tóng zī hū rán lǐng wù zhī
之，童子迴首，胝 却竪起指，童子忽然領悟。胝
jiāng shùn shì wèi zhòng yuē wú dé tiān lóng yì zhī tóu chán yì shēng
將順世，[3] 謂眾曰：「吾得天龍 一指頭禪，一生
shòu yòng bú jìn yán qì shì miè
受用不盡。」言訖[4] 示滅。

[1] 【詰問】 S:【诘问】 [jié wèn]: “to ask questions” / “to interrogate.”

[2] 【法要】 [fǎ yào]: “the essential teaching of Buddhism” (佛法的要義).

[3] 【順世】 S:【顺世】 [shùn shì]: “the passing away of a monk.”

[4] 【訖】 S:【讫】 [qì]: “finished.”

【日】

こ ぐ ていおしょう およ きつもん た いっし
舉す。俱胝和尚、凡そ詰問あれば唯だ一指を
こ のち どうじ ちな がいにん と おしょうなん
舉す。後に童子あり、因みに外人問う、「和尚何の
ほうよう と どうじ ま しとう たて てい き
法要をか說く。」童子も亦た指頭を竪つ。胝、聞い
つい やいば も そ ゆび た どうじ ふ つうごうこく
て遂に刃を以って其の指を斷つ。童子負痛號哭し

[67] See Blue Cliff Record, case 19 and the Book of Serenity, case 84: 「舉。俱胝和尚。凡有所問只竪一指。」

て去る。胝、復た之を召す。童子、首を廻らす。胝、却って指を竪起す。童子忽然として領悟す。胝、將に順世せんとして、衆に謂って曰く、「吾、天龍一指頭の禪を得て、一生受用不盡」と。言い訖って滅を示す。

【E】

Whenever he was asked questions, Juzhi simply raised a finger. After a while, there was a boy who, when asked by people outside of the monastery, “What is the most essential element of the master’s preaching?”, also simply raised a finger. Juzhi heard about this and then went on to cut off his finger. The boy cried because of the pain and began to run away. Juzhi then called him back and, when the boy turned his head toward him, Juzhi raised his own finger. Suddenly, the boy was enlightened. When Juzhi was about to depart from this world, he told his congregation: “I received the ‘one-finger Zen’ from Tianlong, and a whole life was not enough to exhaust it.” As he finished these words, he then passed away.

If there is only one thing, every single sign points toward it. Then, there is only the seemingly infinite expanse of the heavens above us. It is the vessel inside which the earth is contained, with the tree of life sprouting out of it, and the world around us built by one of its branches. What is the origin and the destination of our existence? What is the essence of our being? Why did the masters of yore travel to the other side of the earth? There is only one answer. Only one reply would accurately represent the truth, the one pointing out the only thing there is. It leads to the only truth, no-thing-ness itself, whereas lengthy sentences only lead men further into the mire of the world, confusing them with a profusion of things, creations of their mind, and convincing them that the sign is equal to what it points toward. They attentively observe the finger, but they do not realize that it is only meant to guide the eyes toward something greater, something with which they are called to become intimate, their true face, their home, the light of being itself.

The finger is for all that more than a symbol. It may be seen as the foundation stone of the world. Long before our ancestors became what bears the name of "man," they indeed were tree-dwelling apes, meticulously selected by life itself for their elongated fingers, allowing them to firmly seize branches and swing between them. As they finally stood erect to depart from the forests and wander through vast plains and grasslands, their hands were freed, and they soon found new uses for them. Pairing their grunts and shouts or their facial expressions with the movements of their arms and hands, their upper limbs naturally became arrows of flesh and blood pointing at where the attention of their brethren should be. The finger thus became a pointing tool, a signifier designating a signified. Without a word, without a character, the finger became one of the first signs of the world, before our branch of life came to be called mankind. From this foundation stone, the fleeting and arbitrary nature of the world can, despite this fact, clearly be seen.

Raising a finger upward, a sign is invoked. A signifier points toward something. Should the fingertip be observed? The clouds passing over the head of those observing this sign at this instant, or perhaps the sun shining at its zenith? The truth is in the eye of the beholder. He is the one tracing the boundaries of what he thinks is designated. It may be anything, everything, or nothing. It entirely depends on the extent of the horizon of his mind. The finger may gather the entire world at its tip, representing its primordial essence, that is, a single thing that stands out of the whole of the skies, out of no-thing-ness itself, and points at it. It is a sign of ec-stasy, a standing out, so that the environment from which one stands out may finally be seen, with the distance necessary for it to be visible.

The child of the way, however, at first only sees a finger. He is perplexed by the silence around it and its cryptic nature. It is a joke, certainly, or perhaps a mark of laziness, a refusal to answer properly: with words, clear and simple, lighting the path to be followed. But the mistake does not escape the acute gaze of the one who first raised his finger, and still, without opening his mouth, without uttering a sound, a lesson is thus offered. A blade as sharp as his mind is in his hand, and with a swift blow, the nimble finger of the child is irreversibly severed. Raising once more his finger in view of the boy, he sees the void left by this seemingly cruel deed, which is, even so, an astounding display of compassion. He sees that even without a part of his body, he is the same being as before. Finally, he sees what the finger is pointing toward. The bloody finger on the ground points toward the same thing, and so does the wound on his hand. The void points to the void. The absence of things points toward no-thing-ness, and the lines separating things have been cut off, triggering a flood of light engulfing the boy's world, illuminating his heart, showing him the truth of the sky.

Case 83 —Not the Wind, nor the Flag —
非風非幡

Source: The Gateless Barrier Case 29.

【中】

liù zǔ yīn fēng yáng chà fān yǒu èr sēng duì lùn yì yún fān dòng
六祖因風颺[1] 刹[2] 幡，有二僧對論，一云幡動
yì yún fēng dòng wǎng fù céng wèi qì lǐ zǔ yún bú shì fēng dòng bú
一云風動，往復曾未契理，[3] 祖云：「不是風動，不
shì fān dòng rén zhě xīn dòng èr sēng sǒng rán
是幡動，仁者心動。」二僧悚然。[4]

[1] 【颺】 S:【飏】 [yáng]: “to float because of the wind.”

[2] 【刹】 S:【刹】 [chà]: the flag pole in front of a Buddhist temple.

[3] 【契理】 [qì lǐ]: “to agree” (when arguing about something).

[4] 【悚然】 [sǒng rán]: “to be frightened.”

【日】

こ ろく そ ちな かぜ せっぱん あ に そう
擧す。六祖、因みに風刹幡を颺ぐ。二僧
あ たいろん ひとり いわ はたうご ひと
有り、對論す。一は云く、「幡動く。」一りは
いわ かぜうご おうふく かつ ま り かな
云く、「風動く」と。往復して曾て未だ理に契わ
そ いわ こ かぜ うご こ はた
ず。祖云く、「是れ風の動くにあらず、是れ幡の
うご にんしゃ こころうご に そうしょうぜん
動くにあらず、仁者の心動くのみ」と。二僧悚然たり。

【E】

The sixth patriarch was near a temple flag fluttering in the wind, and two monks were arguing about it, with one saying that the flag was moving, and the other saying that the wind was moving, arguing back and forth without settling the issue. The sixth patriarch then said, “It is not the wind, nor the flag. It is the gentlemen’s minds that are moving.” The two monks were stunned.

The winds constantly clean the earth of its dust. They scatter the fleecy clouds and allow the fiery brilliance of the sun to be poured out into the world. They cannot be seen, and yet they are everywhere. Their presence is ephemeral, and they cannot be grasped by anyone, but they can level mountains and carry vast expanses of water to the highest peaks, if given enough time. During the night and the day, winter or summer, their soft embrace is felt in every corner of the earth, and the world constantly reacts to their whims. They are stirred up by the first rays of dawn or by the elegant beating of the wings of a butterfly. They are tamed by lofty buildings or by the coldness of the ocean. They have no beginning or end, no origin or destination. None can pinpoint their presence or their absence, as they are but an indistinguishable whole, enfolding the entirety of the face of our planet. They thus mirror the essence of the heavens themselves, and of the whole of being that they contain.

The winds are a whole, but they are also tightly intertwined with the earth that they enfold. A flag hung on the top of a pole flutters in the winds, its shape echoing their fugacious movements, while the pole itself dances, entranced by the mysterious forces of the heavens, imparting a particular rhythm to the ground itself, without anyone being able to tell the extent of this reaction. The heavens and the earth are one and the same; the distinction between them being is merely the product of our minds, of our world. It is thus futile to track down causes and effects, as they are seamlessly joined. Only as a convenience do we tear the fabric of the heavens into fine strips that can be seized and sewn into new things according to our inspiration, but this is a mere illusion. This fabric is impossible to tear apart, except in our imagination, in our own little world that does not represent the immutable truth of the earth and the sky.

The winds therefore do not move, and neither does the flag flutter. It is the mind that continuously causes thoughts to emerge, cutting out the unicity of all that is with the sword of perception, creating winds, flags, and poles, none of which are known outside of our cranium. To believe that the mind would therefore be the only source of motion in the universe, the prime mover of the cosmos, would for all that be to fall prey to a dangerous delusion. The indistinguishable tumult of the whole of being, of the entirety of the skies, occurs whether we are there to witness it or not, but without the activity of our perception and reason, there is only no-thing, as things only belong to our world. Our very minds, however, do not lie outside of the extent encompassed by the heavens. We, ourselves, are part of the whole of the earth, under the sky, and thus the movements of our minds only exist within our minds. They are also mere illusions, a means for us to attempt to understand what we are.

Observing the flag, a symbol of the teaching that is preached around

it, one may thus find a doorway out of the world and into the truth of being, a hole into which the great abyss may be beheld, revealing the essence of all that is. Seeing the chaotic but harmonious fluttering of the fabric, it is the commotion of the entirety of the heavens that may be perceived, from the surface of the flag until the confines of the universe, without a hairbreadth of separation between the two. Clearly seeing the vacuity of the world, the man of the way will still fearlessly delve into it, tarnishing his robe with its dust raised by the winds, and he will play with the things of the world, which he does not need, simply to benefit his brethren, in which he also sees his own true face.

Case 84 —This Mind Is Buddha —即心即佛

Source: The Gateless Barrier Case 30.

【中】

mǎ zǔ yīn dà méi wèn rú hé shì fó zǔ yún jí
馬祖 因 大梅 問：「如何是佛。」祖云：「即[1]
xīn shì fó
心是佛。」

[1] 【即】 [jí]: “namely” / “that is”.

【日】

こ ば そ ちな だいばい と いか
擧す。馬祖、因みに大梅問う、「如何なるか
こ ほとけ そ いわ そくしんそくぶつ
是れ佛。」祖云く、「即心即佛。」

【E】

Mazu was asked by Damei: “What is Buddha?” Mazu said, “The mind is Buddha.”

If one asks about the fundamental essence of being, he is already on the wrong track. He is like a fool searching outside in the street for a coin he has lost inside his house, solely because the clarity of the summer sun shining outside would appear to make this search easier. He inquires with words, but the answer he seeks falls outside the realm of words, and thus his undertaking is doomed from the start. This yet does not

imply that words are utterly useless. Another man, one who sees where the one straying should go, can use words to lead him back to the right track, back to the threshold of his own home, where what he is looking for is located. Then, he will just have to cross this threshold, and there will he be in a good position to find what he has lost.

Words are therefore a two-edged sword. The holiest words found in man's world may indeed also be those that most absolutely betray the nature of what they designate. To utter the word "god" is to dirty one's mouth and to insult the divine, as it reduces the incomprehensible glory of being to a vulgar thing of the world, labeled with an arbitrary name, associated with a web of equally arbitrarily defined properties, devised by man's imagination rather than through experience.[68] To declare that one is awakened is to fall back to sleep and plunge into the realm of dreams. To talk about the essential nature of being is to step into a dung pile, and afterward, one inevitably needs arduous efforts to clean himself. One seeing through the clouds of the world, having the infinity of the heavens constantly before his eyes, is, all the same, ready to sacrifice himself, like a good shepherd walking through the mud to bring back the lost sheep to the path. He thus accepts that he must soil his mouth with a few vulgar words of guidance: "The essential nature of being is your mind." You are what you seek. You are only searching for your own nature, desperately trying to see your true face, not realizing that what you seek is all around you, inside you, and it is you, without any boundary between these. As with all words, meaning is in the eye of the beholder. You have to make sense of what you are offered by others, and a single word may be found to be an inexhaustible well of meaning.

Our essential nature is our mind. This may also mean that these concepts belong exclusively to our world, built by our reason, and that what is to be found does not lie inside this realm. There is no "god," no "essential nature," outside of the domain of words and characters. This, despite this fact, does not imply a denial of what we intend to designate with these names, only that the name differs from what it points toward, and our mind can only grasp the name and concept linked to it, not the thing itself. Outside of our mind, there is neither any "mind" nor any "essential nature," and to become aware of this state of fact is the first step toward a form of liberation and an experience of this essential nature.

Someone well-acquainted with the world may therefore play with words, knowing their arbitrary and ambiguous nature, and thus also

[68] See Wumen's comment on this case: "Just uttering the word 'Buddha' should be enough to make one feel the need to wash his mouth for three days! If he is such a man, just hearing someone utter 'mind is Buddha' will cause him to run away while covering his ears." Chinese original: 「爭知道說箇佛字三日漱口。若是箇漢。見說即心是佛。掩耳便走。」, From: 《禪宗無門關》。 CBETA (Case 30).

dispense meticulously crafted sentences to the newcomers, those still caught in the mire of the world, mistaking the finger for what it points toward. Deliberately offering perplexing words, he may cloud the minds of their recipients, thereby causing them to question their world itself, as it does not give them any clear answer. Perplexed by puzzles of words, he is stunned, speechless, forced to let the flow of his thoughts dwindle, and this is when he may begin to see the light piercing through the clouds of his mind.[69]

Case 85 —Bodhidharma Gives Peace to a Mind —達磨安心

Source: The Gateless Barrier Case 41.

【中】

dá mó miàn bì èr zǔ lì xuě duàn bì yún dì zǐ xīn wèi
達磨 面壁，二祖立雪斷臂[1] 云：「弟子心未
ān qī shī ān xīn mó yún jiāng xīn lái yǔ rǔ ān zū
安，乞師安心。」磨 云：「將心來，與汝安。」祖
yún mì xīn liǎo bù kě dé mó yún wéi rǔ ān xīn jìng
云：「覓心了不可得。」磨 云：「為汝安心竟。」[2]

[1] 【臂】 [bì]: “an arm.”

[2] 【竟】 [jìng]: “actually” / “indeed.”

【日】

こ だるま めんぺき に そ ゆき た ひじ た
擧す。達磨面壁す。二祖雪に立つ。臂を斷っ
いわ でし こころいま やす こ し あんしん
て云く、「弟子は心未だ安からず、乞う師安心せ
ま いわ しん も きた なんじ た
しめよ。」磨云く、「心を將ち來れ、汝が爲めに
やす そ いわ しん もと つい ふか とく
安んぜん。」祖云く、「心を覓むるに了に不可得な
ま いわ なんじ た あんしん おわ
り。」磨云く、「汝が爲めに安心し竟んぬ。」

【E】

[69] See this answer of Mazu Daoyi concerning the meaning of “mind is Buddha,” where he answered: “to cause the infant to stop crying.” Original Chinese: 「僧問江西馬祖道一禪師：『和尚為甚麼說即心即佛？』師曰：『為止小兒啼。』」 From: 《景德传灯录卷第六》。 CBETA .

Bodhidharma sat facing a wall, and the second patriarch stood outside in the snow. He severed his arm and said, "The mind of this disciple is not at peace. Master, please give peace to his mind." Bodhidharma says: "If you bring me that mind, I will give it peace for you." The patriarch said, "I seek to find my mind, but fail to find it." Bodhidharma said, "I have already given peace to your mind."

It is easy to let go of the things of the earth, what can be touched with the hands and seen with the eyes. One can cast them far away and never see them again. Even one's body parts may be cut off and abandoned, offered as a sacrifice, as a testimony to one's will to forgo the world and enter no-thing-ness, even when one has yet to discover the gate leading up to it. With a sharp blade in one hand, the man eager to follow the path may sever one of his arms to prove his determination and express the anguish holding sway over his mind, but how to let go of what cannot be touched by a blade or a hand? How can one get rid of what cannot be seen with the eyes?

To find peace of mind is the easiest and the hardest. One may feel assailed by anxiety and despair, strangled and smothered by a dark force whose origin and goal are unknown to him. It seems that he has no control over himself or his emotions, being a slave of the whims of his heart, ignoring who manipulates it. Such a man is plunged in gloom because of the illusions pervading his world. So convinced of the reality of the fruits of the imagination of his brethren that he is ready to mutilate his body to appease the need he has for them and to be freed from them, failing to see that without his support and his faith in them, these illusions would vanish more quickly as droplets of water caught in the torrid gusts of the brightest months. He is a greedy treasure hunter digging the soil of a cave in search of gold and jewels, possessed by his desire and impatience, feverish because of the fear of being outpaced by another, frantically sweeping the soil and gazing in every corner, but once every inch of it has been dug, and once every part of it has been thoroughly examined, comes the inevitable realization: there is nothing there! He was mistaken, blinded by desire. Then, the excitement and fever give way to laughter. The tension is relaxed, and the mind is soothed: he was a fool.[70]

[70] See: Yamada, Kou'un, *Mumonkan (Gateless Gate)* [Unpublished manuscript]: "We are all searching for truth and peace of mind outside ourselves, which is like hunting for a man on an uninhabited island. Once you have found out that the island is uninhabited, your desire to search for a man there will end."

One hoping for his mind to find peace should therefore first find his mind, his self. When his true face is seen, and he realizes that the anguish that had taken hold of his mind is the product of the same mind, he finds out that there is no longer any thing to let go of, and that nothing but himself can smother his mind. He was the cause of his own despair, and only he can cause his liberation. The gate toward no-thing-ness then appears before his eyes, as he lets go of his mind itself, ceasing to be a subject, a mind bewitching a body. Clarity penetrates the great cave, and there is nothing in it. Even the one seeking the treasure that the cave was supposed to conceal has vanished into thin air, and it is absolutely empty. There is no treasure nor hunter, no cave nor light, only the vast abyss, the infinite wall whose uniform image depicts no-thing, the white snow that covers the mountains and the valleys, leaving no-thing to be seen, only absolute clarity, perfect blindness, the most complete peacefulness.

Case 86 —Piling Up Snow in a Silver Bowl —銀碗里盛雪

Source: The Blue Cliff Record Case 13.

【中】

jǔ sēng wèn bā líng rú hé shì tí pó zōng bā líng yún yín wǎn lǐ chéng xuě

舉。僧問巴陵：「如何是提婆宗。」[1] 巴陵云：「銀椀裏盛[2] 雪。」

[1] 【提婆宗】 [tí pó zōng]: “the Deva Sect.” Āryadeva, or Deva, was a disciple of Nagarjuna, the founder of the Madhyamika school of Indian Buddhism. He was a Sri Lankan who lived in the third century A.D. He was known for his wisdom and often debated with non-Buddhists, but was later assassinated by them. The term Deva Sect is used in a Zen context to designate what is thought to represent the Indian ancestor of the Zen school, and thus Zen itself.

[2] 【盛】 [chéng]: (of a vessel) “to contain” / “to bear.” Not to be mistaken for: 盛 [shèng], meaning “to flourish” / “to thrive.”

【日】

こ そう はりょう と いか こ だいば しゅう はりょういわ ぎんわんり ゆき も

擧す。僧、巴陵に問う、「如何なるか是れ提婆宗。」巴陵云く、「銀椀裏に雪を盛る。」

【E】

A monk asked Baling: "What is the Deva Sect?" Baling said, "Piling up snow in a silver bowl."

[1] "The Deva sect": See note 1 of the Chinese text.

When the radiant face of the sun is not visible long enough to warm the earth, and as the waters of the ocean carried by the winds in the heavenly ether are chilled by this conspicuous absence, the clouds are turned into vast arrays of snowflakes softly gliding toward the ground and the seas. All around, they fall, without a destination, letting themselves be guided, until they touch the earth. Observing the mass of snowflakes as they fall, all around the cloudy sky, the nature of the snow is hard to perceive and thus often ignored. When it slowly accumulates inside a vessel, it then appears as snow. It can be touched and felt, its coldness numbing the fingers as it turns into water, the snowflakes crushed by the skin while emitting a faint whisper. Then the snow is intimately experienced.

Likewise, when one seeks to experience the truth of being, which pervades the entire world, the whole of the earth and the sky, and yet is seldom adequately approached, the easiest course is to find a vessel where this all-pervading nature can become more apparent, concentrated and easier to perceive. Patiently forged through generations from the metal that is closest in appearance and nature to what it is meant to contain and reveal, continuously hammered by its users to give it an ideal shape, this silver vessel is the tradition, the teaching and practice that guide men toward the way of the sky, helping them see the wonder that pervades all that is, and see one's true face in each snowflake or raindrop falling down from the heavens. The vessel is itself largely superfluous. It does not transform the nature of what is collected into it, but rather simply highlights it, bringing contrast between its inside and outside, allowing the white snow to subtly stand out from the rest of the snow-covered landscape. Once the nature of the sky has been perceived, the vessel itself can be thrown away, or simply passed on to someone who has yet to come to this realization.

The subtle power of a silver bowl may also reveal another aspect of the nature of the snow. It is when it is deprived of the fire of our star, of the light of the gilded orb enthroned in the sky, that the gigantic mass of moisture elevated in the lofty storehouses by the winds is shattered into innumerable pieces, its unicity turned into a multiplicity, minuscule sculptures of ice, each endowed with a unique form, heavenly artworks offered to the earth and its dwellers. When these intricate works of art of nature touch the shining surface of the

silver vessel, they suddenly melt, coming into contact with the warmth of the earth. These minute sculptures, things of the world, once again simply become the raw material out of which they were made. Each snowflake loses its uniqueness, its individuality, and they all merge into one another, becoming water, transparent and formless, almost invisible, indistinguishable from the metallic vessel in which it is contained. Here, the bowl is an instrument revealing the essence of the snowflakes, showing their original form, as the essence of the great ocean, without parts, but rather a whole. Man's eyes see the individual snowflakes, clouds, puddles, or lakes, but he often fails to perceive the essence of water, which is the essence of the earth itself. The same water forms the ocean, fills out the air enfolding the planet, and even forms most of his own body. Observing the melting of the snow inside the vessel, he should perceive that the myriad of things of his world is like these snowflakes, and that the tradition, his inheritance, is a vessel that can show him the essence of these things, unveiling the unicity of all that is, melting down the myriad into a single expanse, extended from the innermost part of his body until the confines of the heavens. Then, the clarity of the snow flooded with the brightness of the sun will fill his eyes. The snow and the silver will be interlaced with one another, and even his hands will disappear, and all will be engulfed in a great avalanche, leaving only an immaculate white earth, plunged in an equally white radiance.

Case 87 —Yunmen's One Appropriate Statement —雲門對一說

Source: The Blue Cliff Record Case 14.

【中】

jǔ sēng wèn yún mén rú hé shì yí dài shí jiào yún mén
舉。僧問雲門：「如何是一代時教。」雲門
yún duì yī shuō
云：「對一說。」[1]

[1] 【對一說】 [duì yī shuō]: The phrasing of this sentence is rather unusual, and thus much ink has been spilled to explain it by translators and interpreters. The most widely accepted and accurate translation nonetheless seems to be "an appropriate statement," the fact of saying something that represents a reply that matches another person's statement.

【日】

こ そう うんもん と いか こ いちだい
舉す。僧、雲門に問う、「如何なるか是れ一代
じきょう うんもんいわ たいいっせつ
時教。」雲門云く、「對一說。」

【E】

A monk asked Yunmen: "What is the teaching of the whole lifetime?" Yunmen said, "One appropriate statement."

More difficult it is for a man to utter one word of truth than it is to faithfully depict the beauty of a wheat field a few days before the harvest, as the ears gracefully sway with the summer wind and the sun's fiery rays add a golden hue to the grains that will soon sustain the bodies of an entire village. Man's words are crude, and his world is replete with falsehood and caricatures. His utterances may be laden with deep meaning and profound thoughts, but they may at best lead their recipients to the truth, rather than incarnate this truth. Words are a means to an end, and to mistake words for this end marks the end of meaning and the end of the usefulness of words. The teachings of the wisest men of the world are easily surpassed by an instant of contact with the truth of the earth and the skies, and it is so because truth does not belong to the world, which is a mere congregation of images, marrying truth with falsehood, the tangible and the imaginary, without means of asserting which is which.

One may therefore spend a lifetime exploring the vast meanders of the world, lofty towers of knowledge filled with sky-high stacks of manuscripts, rivers of sooty ink and vast plains of pearly white paper, and still fail to satiate his thirst for truth, dying without having drunk a single droplet of it. Wading through approximations, navigating through rough sketches and hasty depictions, he gains a broad view of the whole, but cannot see a single thing clearly, cannot behold its true essence. The teaching of a lifetime would be a single true word, one appropriate statement, a word that would become a gate through which he would be able to slip and escape the world of words and characters itself, breaking out from his tower of knowledge, to contemplate the truth of the sky with his own eyes rather than through the words of his forefathers and brethren. The teaching of a lifetime may be to point out the nature of words, the essence of the world itself, displaying its falsehood, and thereby demonstrating that there is something it points toward. The world is the most useful of things, and the most deceptive. To clearly see what words and the things of the world are is to realize that every single one of them may become such a gateway toward the truth of the sky. Each one of them is false, but each one of them is a door through which we may discover the truth of being, which is one, identical no matter through which door it is seen. Then, a single word may be enough to ponder until one's last breath, no matter which word it is.

There is therefore only one thing to be taught, one thing to be discovered. Every word leads to it, and every image depicts it. The entire world, built by the hands and the mind of man, points toward it, even when its inhabitants cannot fathom its presence or nature. No word is appropriate, and no word is inappropriate. All things simply are as they are, and to see their nature is to see that there is only no-thing. Words may designate different things of the world, but beyond the limits of this world, there is only truth, which is no-thing-ness. Without words, there is no truth or falsehood, only the truth of being, manifest and undeniable, and one simply has to follow any word until its end to find the gate to no-thing-ness, and thoughtlessly plunge into the only truth there is. Man is at all times surrounded by such gates, unlocked, ready to be opened wide and passed through. The first word of a babe may be clearer in this respect than the verbose declaration of a philosopher, and a simple "yes" may roll up the drape that veiled the entirety of the firmament, whereas a mountain of characters may only further conceal the truth of the heavens.

Case 88 —Yunmen's One Upside-Down Statement —雲門倒一說

Source: The Blue Cliff Record Case 15.

【中】

jǔ sēng wèn yún mén bú shì mù qián jī yì fēi mù qián shì
舉。僧問雲門：「不是目前機，[1] 亦非目前事
shí rú hé mén yún dào yī shuō
時，如何。」門云：「倒一說。」[2]

[1] 【機】S:【机】[jī]: "an activity of the mind." Designates the subjective views of the mind, linked to the field of all the possibilities offered by imagination, in contrast to the objective reality of the material things before our eyes (事 [shì]), the earthly environment (境 [jìng]). The word is also directly related to the notion of "opportunity." For other uses of this word, see case 108, case 112, and case 168.

[2] 【倒一說】[dào yī shuō]: "an upside-down statement." The phrasing used here is rather unusual and ambiguous, and thus other interpretations are plausible. It presents a contrast with the 對一說 [duì yī shuō] ("an appropriate statement") of the previous case.

【日】

こ そう うんもん と こ もくぜん き
舉す。僧、雲門に問う、「是れ目前の機に
ま もくぜん じ ひ とき いか もん
あらず、亦た目前の事にも非ざる時は如何。」門
いわ とういっせつ
云く、「倒一說。」

【E】

A monk asked Yunmen: "What is it that's neither an activity [of the mind] in front of my eyes nor a [material] thing in front of my eyes?" Yunmen said, "One upside-down statement."

When digging a deep hole in the ground to ensnare the passer-by, one should always expect to be pushed into it by someone more familiar with the environment surrounding this trap. Begging for something precious and rare, one is puzzled when handed an empty bag, but should not be, as he receives the gift of a lifetime, an invaluable treasure. Looking at the darkness inside it, he may see anything he desires, any thing that his mind can envision, even though there is only no-thing there.

In contrast to no-thing-ness, what stands before our eyes is our world, composed of a million things arrayed into an ordered structure, with houses, living things, tools or machines that we perceive as individual objects and manipulate with our hands or mention with the words on our tongue. They are the objects of the actions undertaken in our daily lives, created or destroyed, transported or bought, mended or given to use, while we are the subjects performing these activities through our will and with our bodies. Many of these things are made of earth, and their essence remains no matter what. They may be burned, crushed, or thrown away, but their substance remains part of the earth, even when they cease to be things of our world. Others are pure products of our minds, ideas and concepts. Even without substance, and unable to appear before eyes, these immaterial things of our world can also be turned into objects through the use of language, put into words and signs that can be mentioned and grasped by the mind and represented upon the earth. The entire world thus is found to be an immense set of objects, on the earth and in the mind. Earth and world, matter and mind, come together to form the realm into which we are thrown at birth, observed and used by a subject: ourselves.

Man, as a subject thrown into a world of objects, is neither an activity of the mind nor a thing of the earth. He stands out of both world and earth, and yet represents the harmonious marriage of them both. He is yet a mystery to himself. He beholds and holds a million things, a million objects found around him, and yet does not see his true face, and fails to grasp his own nature. He fathoms all things and yet remains unfathomable to himself. He may, despite this fact, turn toward himself the beam coming out of the lamp of reason. He may

represent his self with words, as a thing of the world, and thus begin to see himself as an object, shedding light upon his own nature. An upside-down statement, words describing the describer, or the subject taking the place of the object may be a way to begin to see one's true face, but one is bound to be surprised by such a revelation. Indeed, to see oneself is to realize that one is just a mask hung over nothingness itself. Taken off, there is no-thing behind it, only the vastness of the heavens, without a single thing in it, and yet no different from how it appeared before. This is when the subject collapses into the object, and both vanish in a puff of smoke, leaving nothing in their stead. It is just an illusion. The sky protruding out of itself to observe its curvature is what the self is. One upside-down statement is all that is needed to come to such a realization, man putting his true face into a single word, seeing that it represents no-thing, just like any other, as there is none other.[71]

Case 89 —The Rhinoceros Fan —犀牛扇子

Source: The Blue Cliff Record Case 91.

A less complete version of this case is found in the Book of Serenity, case 25.[72]

【中】

jǔ yán guān yí rì huàn shì zhě yǔ wǒ jiāng xī niú shàn zi
舉。鹽官一日喚侍者：「與我將犀牛[1]扇子
lái shì zhě yún shàn zi pò yě guān yún shàn zi jì pò
來。」侍者云：「扇子破也。」官云：「扇子既破，
huán wǒ xī niú ér lái shì zhě wú duì tóu zǐ yún bù cí jiāng chū
還我犀牛兒來。」侍者無對。投子云：「不辭將出，
kǒng tóu jiǎo bù quán xuě dòu niān yún wǒ yào bù quán dí tóu jiǎo
恐頭角不全。」雪竇拈[2]云：「我要不全底頭角。」
shí shuāng yún ruò huán hé shàng jí wú yě xuě dòu niān yún xī niú
石霜云：「若還和尚即無也。」雪竇拈云：「犀牛
ér yóu zài zī fú huà yì yuán xiàng yú zhōng shū yì niú zì
兒猶在。」[3]資福畫一圓相，於中書一「牛」字
gǎo xuě dòu niān yún shì lái wèi shén me bù jiāng chū bǎo fú
藁。[4]雪竇拈云：「適來為什麼不將出。」保福
yún hé shàng nián zūn bié qīng rén hǎo xuě dòu niān yún kě
云：「和尚年尊，[5]別請人好。」雪竇拈云：「可
xī láo ér wú gōng
惜勞而無功。」

[71]See: 吳平。《新譯碧巖集》。台北：三民書局股份有限公司，2005. Page 194: 「雲門文偃的回答是：修煉自己，做好準備，自己對自己說法，這就是『倒一說』。」

[72]See Book of Serenity, case 25: 「舉。鹽官一日喚侍者。與我過犀牛扇子來者云扇子破也官云。扇子既破。還我犀牛兒來者無對資福畫一圓相。於中書一牛字。」

[1] 【犀牛】 [xī niú]: “a rhinoceros”.

[2] 【拈】 [niān]: Literally, “to grasp with the fingers.” Here, it seems to indicate that Xuedou has understood/grasped something here, and thus added an interjection. It may also be a mark of approval.

[3] 【猶在】 S:【犹在】 [yóu zài]: “to still be here.”

[4] 【藁】 [gǎo]: variant of 稾 [gǎo], meaning “a draft” / “a manuscript.” The Japanese version did not translate this word.

[5] 【年尊】 [nián zūn]: “to be of a certain age and respected.”

【日】

舉す。鹽官、一日、侍者を喚ぶ、我が與に犀牛の

扇子を將ち來たれ。侍者云く、「扇子破れたり。」

官云く、「扇子既に破れたれば、我に犀牛兒を還し

來たれ。」侍者對ること無し。投子云く、「將き

出だすことを辞せざるも、恐らくは頭角全からざ

らん。」雪竇拈げて云く、「我は全からざる底の

頭角を要す。」石霜云く、「若し和尚に還さば即ち

無からん。」雪竇拈げて云く、「犀牛兒は猶お在り。」

資福、一圓相を畫き、中に一つの牛の字を書く。

雪竇拈げて云く、「適來、爲什麼にか將き出ださ

ざる。」保福云く、「和尚は年尊し、別に人に請え

ば好し。」雪竇拈げて云く、「惜しむべし、勞して

功無し。」

【E】

One day, Yanguan called his attendant: “Bring me the rhinoceros fan.” The attendant said, “The fan is broken.” Yanguan said, “Since the fan is broken, bring me the rhinoceros himself.” The attendant did not answer. Touzi

said, "I wouldn't mind bringing it out, but I fear the horn on its head would not be complete." (Xuedou commented: "I want that incomplete horn.") Shishuang [commented on this episode and] said, "If I brought it back to the master, nothing would remain." (Xuedou commented: "The rhinoceros is still here.") Zifu drew a circle and wrote the ideogram for "ox," [forming the second half of the word "rhinoceros,"][1] in it. (Xuedou commented: "Why didn't you bring it out sooner?") Baofu said, "The Master is venerable and advanced in years. It would be better for him to ask someone else." (Xuedou commented: "Such a shame! All these efforts have been expended, and yet they are fruitless!")

[1] The Chinese word 犀牛 [xī niú] means rhinoceros, while the character on the right side, 牛 [niú], means "ox" when used alone.

To see beyond words and characters, one must first see what they are, and realize what they conceal as well as what they reveal. They are the most powerful tools to illuminate the path before our eyes, but they are also a thick blindfold veiling the truth of the earth and the sky. A lens that magnifies but also deforms, or a beam of colored light that taints all that it touches, leading the observer to mistake the tint of the beam for the tint of what it touches, this is what man's language and his world are. Playing with words and fiddling with characters, one may bring attention to their nature, and make their work apparent to the eyes of the beginner on the path. Highlighting the boundaries of signs, one is invited to look beyond these frontiers and see the truth that they attempt to represent, without relying upon the work of these signs. As a demonstration of such a phenomenon, one may call for his brethren to bring him the hedgehog needle, and upon hearing that it is broken, he may ask for the hedgehog itself to be brought to him, leaving the one to whom this order is given perplexed, forcing him to consider a new layer of meaning of the words he uses. This may go further, as he may indeed associate the breaking of the hedgehog needle with the breaking of its name itself, the hedge—hog needle. In the same spirit, he may now ask for the hedge- or the -hog themselves to be brought to him, the pieces of this broken needle, this shattered piece of the world. Asking for a fan made of sea—lion teeth, and being told that it would be of no use since the object is irreparably damaged, he shall ask for the sea- or the lion- themselves to be brought forth before his eyes so that he would witness with his own eyes the state of the object. A wedge is thereby

driven between world and earth, between the sign and what it represents. The gaze of the audience is brought to the words themselves, and to their breaking down. Broken into two pieces, words can find themselves completely transformed, designating radically different things. Likewise, what if all the words we use simply represent the broken shards of the sky itself, the scattered pieces of the whole of nature?

If one brings the hog or the lion, he who asked for them will, even so, still have no needle or fan. He will not even have the broken pieces of these objects, but what will he have then? When the nature of words is seen, he knows that what he has is everything. What he sought is right in front of him, and always has been.[73] He simply has to mend the pieces of the world, to fuse the countless shards made of things and words so that the image that this world gives of the truth of the sky will be as faithful as such an image can be. But he may also pick up one of these pieces and bring it close to his eye and see the whole of the earth and the sky through it. The hog may be seen through the hedge, and the lion may appear at the bottom of the transparent sea. The hedge—hog may pass through the eye of a needle, and the sea—lion seizes the fan from the hand of those inconvenienced by the sweltering heat of the bright season. These objects are always with us, even when we fail to notice their presence,[74] but once seen, they are our world, our most precious thing, which we are for all that then eager to let go, to let go no-where, where there is no-thing.

The whole of the earth may then be seen in each grain of sand. To bring a single object made of it is to bring the entirety of the material realm. One is offered a needle, and nothing remains to be given. He possesses all that can be appropriated. One thing is enough to have everything, but to have no-thing is to rule the world and the earth. To perceive the subtle power of the world is, however, to see that it is not even necessary to be given a single thing to open up the door toward no-thing-ness itself, to find the way out of the mire of the world, the illusion of words and characters. A single word may invoke the presence of the whole of nature. Someone inscribes the word for lion on the mud

[73]Hakuin (白隱) may hint at the signifier/signified dichotomy in the following sentence: "Greedily gazing at the moon in the sky, he lost the pearl in the palm of his hand." From: Cleary, Thomas. *Secrets of the Blue Cliff Record: Zen Comments by Hakuin and Tenkei.* Shambhala Publications, 2002. n.p. (The original Japanese text could not be found by the author).

[74]Xuedou's verse hints at the fact that the fan represents the true self: "One has used the rhinoceros fan for so long, but when asked about it, he knows absolutely nothing of it." Chinese original: 「犀牛扇子用多時問著元來總不知」, From: 《佛果圜悟禪師碧巖錄》。 CBETA (Case 91); Furthermore, Wansong's preface to this case hints at a possible interpretation: "Lands and seas are boundless. Yet, they are not separated from what is right here. All the specks of dust of the world, throughout all the ages, are all right here, right now!" Chinese original: 「剎海無涯。不離當處。塵劫前事。盡在而今。」 From: 《萬松老人評唱天童覺和尚頌古從容庵錄》。 CBETA (Case 25).

with a wooden stick, and the lion is found there, brought to life and to the earth with a stroke, with a single combined action of the hand and the mind, an instance of manifestation of the power of the world upon the earth. Encircled with a movement of the arm, the lion finds himself thrown into the vastness of the skies, which are represented by this sign, and thus brought into presence in this insignificant, limited portion of the earth.[75] The unfathomable is thus contained within a sign, forced to be here, represented within itself, the whole of the heavens. Such is the remarkable power of signs, but swiftly erased by the winds and the rain, soon nothing remains of the circle and the word inside it. The products of our thoughts and our hands are bound to fade away, eroded by the unstoppable turning of the heavenly wheels, the work of the skies, but these are mere tools, and what they represented forever remains. One only has to open up his eyes to contemplate the great lion and the all-encompassing sky. One may then realize that there is nothing broken, nothing to mend, nothing to be brought forth or searched for. There is only the vastness of the skies.

Case 90 —Qingyuan's Price of Rice —清源米價

Source: The Book of Serenity Case 5.

【中】

jǔ sēng wèn qīng yuán rú hé shì fó fǎ dà yì yuán
舉。僧問清源：「如何是佛法大意。」源
yún lú líng mǐ zuò me jià
云：「盧陵米作麼價。」

【日】

こ そう せいげん と いか こ ぶっぽう
舉す。僧、清源に問う、「如何なるか是れ佛法の
たいい げんいわ ろりょう べいさ も あたい
大意。」原云く、「盧陵の米作麼の價ぞ。」

【E】

[75]See: Yamada, Kou'un, *Hekiganroku (Blue Cliff Record)* [Unpublished manuscript]. He relates it to another story: "Mazu once sent a letter to Qinshan which consisted solely of a circle drawn on the paper. Upon receiving the letter, Qinshan put a black dot of ink in the middle of the circle and sent it back. That's an interesting exchange! The circle is the world of emptiness. The dot is the world of phenomena; it is the ox." (This passage could not be located in the Japanese version).

A monk asked Qingyuan: "What is the great meaning of Buddhism?" Qingyuan said, "What is the price of rice in Luling?"

Man craves certainty. He is often desperate to find something solid, immutable, and secure to which he could hold on, as he beholds the turning of the celestial vault, with the earth carried through the cosmos, the tree of life rooted in the ground, and the world built on its branches, caught in a titanic flow, with his own strength negligible compared to the heavenly forces. He thus impassively allows himself to be transported through time and space. In his mind, if there is one thing that should be constant, unadulterated through the vicissitudes of the great flow, it is the most fundamental law of nature, the essence that pervades the universe, the frame holding the heavenly wheels in place and allowing their revolutions. He therefore seeks to comprehend the fundamental law of nature, the primordial essence pervading all that is, but as it cannot be grasped with his hands, he is condemned to simply try to understand it through reason. Turned into a word, transformed into a thing of the world, this fundamental law becomes fully part of it, and it is thus endowed with a quality shared by all things belonging to the world: arbitrariness. The meaning of a word is indeed largely determined by the person using it. When the rigid earth and the infinite sky are brought into man's world, they lose their absoluteness. They then become fleeting and transient, with blurry boundaries and a flexible substance. Thus introduced into man's realm, the fundamental law of nature ceases to be something secure, something that can be completely relied upon, a foundation upon which the tallest structures may be built and may eternally stand.

The meaning of the fundamental law of nature therefore differs in nature from the fundamental law itself. This law is the basis upon which the celestial wheels rest. It is the way of the sky that sets the course of all that *is*, the absolute and all-pervading essence of all. When one tries to understand its "meaning," one nonetheless is bound to remain stuck within the boundaries of the world. Meaning is indeed a product of man's reason, a property of the things forming his world, produced by his mind and his hands, rather than something found upon the earth and in the sky. Such meaning may be found, in the form of a heap of words carefully arrayed into an ordered structure, describing some of its aspects and depicting the role it may play in man's existence, but one should remain conscious of the fact that such meaning of the law does not share the immutable and secure nature of the law itself. There is no objective definition of it, no series of words faithfully representing its truth. It fluctuates constantly depending on whom one asks, and on the

unceasing revolutions of the heavenly wheels themselves, as one's opinion on the matter ineluctably changes with the flow of time. One may as well ask what the price of rice is in our hometown, and the answer will vary just as much. This meaning cannot be pinpointed. There is no precise or single answer, only a continuous flux, like a wobbling image of the moon and the stars on the surface of a lake. This uncertainty still does not negate the value of such a representation, and by watching it, one may find out which way one should look to observe the source of its radiance. One should only be aware of the difference between the image and its source, even though they both share the same fundamental essence. Both are ruled by the same law, which governs the world as much as the earth and the skies themselves.

Case 91 —Xingyang's Suparnin —興陽妙翅

Source: The Book of Serenity Case 44.

【中】

jǔ sēng wèn xīng yáng pōu hé shàng suō jié chū hǎi qián kūn
舉。僧問 興陽剖 和尚：「 娑竭 [1] 出海乾坤[2]
jìng dí miàn xiāngchéng shì ruò hé shī yún miào chì niǎo wáng dāng
靜，覿面[3] 相呈事若。」 何 師云：「妙翅鳥王[4] 當
yǔ zhòu gè zhōng shéi shì chū tóu rén sēng yún hū yù chū tóu shí yòu
宇宙，箇中誰是出頭人。」僧云：「忽遇出頭時，又
zuò me shēng yáng yún sì hú zhuō jiū jūn bù jué yù lóu qián
作麼生。」 陽 云：「似鶻[5] 捉鳩。[6] 君不覺，御樓前
yàn shī zhī zhēn sēng yún rèn me zé chā shǒu dāng xiōng tuì shēn sān bù
驗[7] 始知真。」僧云：「恁麼則叉手當胸退身三步。」
yáng yún xū mí zuò xià wū guī zī mò dài zhòng jiào diǎn é hén
陽 云：「須彌座[8] 下烏龜子，莫待重教點額痕。」

[1] 【娑竭羅龍王】 [suō jié luó lóng wáng]: Sāgara (सागर) the dragon-king (龍王 [lóng wáng] in Chinese, "Nāgarāja" नागराज in Sanskrit), whose name means "ocean" in Sanskrit, is a protective deity of Buddhism presiding over the world's supply of rain, according to the "Avataṃsaka Sūtra."

[2] 【乾坤】 [qián kūn]: "the sky and the earth" / "the universe." A term originating from the "Book of Changes" (易經).

[3] 【覿面】 [dí miàn]: "to face someone."

[4] 【妙翅鳥王】 [miào chì niǎo wáng]: the Suparṇin (सुपर्णिन्) or Suparṇa, meaning "well-winged" in Sanskrit, also known as Garuḍa (Sanskrit:गरुड), are giant birds having extraordinary powers, and a wingspan of dozens of kilometers. This legendary creature originates from Hindu mythology.

[5] 【鶻】 S:【鹘】 [hú]: "a falcon."

[6] 【鳩】 S:【鸠】 [jiū]: "a turtledove."

[7] 【御樓前驗】: “an inspection before the balcony.” A reference to the following story taking place during the Warring States period (c. 475–221 B.C.): Lord Pinyuan (平原), the brother of the king of Zhao (趙), a man of great wealth, built a magnificent palace with a balcony that overlooked the main road of the city. One day, a crippled man was passing by, when a beautiful lady standing on the balcony saw him and laughed at him. The crippled man was offended and demanded her head. Lord Pinyuan instead presented the head of a prisoner as the head of the beautiful lady. His men nonetheless were not deceived and left him due to their disappointment. The lord then resigned himself to cutting off the head of the lady so that his men and good fortune would return. (See: 「平原君。趙勝相趙惠文王及孝成王家起重樓。臨民家。民有躄者。美人笑之。躄者請美人之首。君諾而不行。賓客去半。君斬囚人代之。賓固不至。遂梟美人首。懸御樓前驗其真也。」 From: 《万松老人评唱天童觉和尚颂古从容庵录》。 CBETA.)

[8] 【須彌座】S:【须弥座】[xū mí zuò]: “the Sumeru altar.” A pedestal shaped like Mount Sumeru on which a Buddha statue can be placed.

【日】

挙す。僧、興陽剖和尚に問う、「娑竭、海を出でて乾坤靜かなり、覿面相呈すること若何。」師云く、「妙翅鳥王宇宙に當る、箇の中誰か是れ出頭の人。」僧云く、「忽出頭に遇う時又作麼生。」陽云く、「鶻の鳩を捉うるに似たり、君覺らずんば御樓前に驗して始めて眞を知れ。」僧云く、「恁麼ならば叉手當胸退身三歩せん。」陽云く、「須彌座下の烏龜子、重ねて額を點して痕せしむることを待つこと莫れ。」

【E】

A monk asked Master Pou of Xingyang: “Sagara, the dragon king, has emerged out of the ocean, and the heaven and earth went quiet. What will you do when you face him?” Yang said, “Suparnin, the king of the birds, absorbs the entire universe. Who can stick out his head from it?” The monk said, “But when one does stick out one’s head from it, what then?” Yang said, “It is like a falcon catching a pigeon. If this gentleman fails to realize it, he will learn the truth through an ‘inspection before the balcony.’”[1] The monk said, “If so, then I’ll clasp my hands before my chest and retreat three steps.”

Yang said, "You black tortoise under the Sumeru altar. Don't wait to once again be taught a lesson, being struck on the forehead and getting a scar!"

[1] "An inspection before the balcony": See note 7 of the Chinese text.

The world we inhabit and contribute to constructing every day is an ocean of things. We wade through it, or dive into its depths, and often lose sight of the beauty of the heavens above its surface, and of the shining presence of our star, whose luminous rays are only seen in the shallows. Allured by this light, observing the images of the sun on the creases of the waves, like a thousand stars balanced in the sky, one may be guided to pass the planar threshold separating water from air, raising his eyes to the source of all brilliance, finally seeing the oneness of what appeared like a thousand things. The immense body of the ocean is then seen for what it is, a vast sea of illusions, a mass of liquid dreams, fleeting images and deceitful transparency, inviting the inattentive beings to the shadowy depths, where all that is seen are the fruit of our imagination. The majesty of the heavens is then finally revealed, and its emptiness and perfect clarity are unveiled and beheld. The gilded radiance of the sun and the silvery countenance of the moon attract the eyes and the flesh of the discoverer, more vigorously than the pull of the earth. He thus soars above the waters like a giant dragon, its head turned to the zenith, its tail waving and stirring up tempests that will sweep away all the dust of the dry land. Emboldened and proud, he feels stronger than all other creatures of the earth and the seas, more agile than the dolphin, and more impressive than the blue whale. No one would be able to bring him down from the heights he has attained, and even the earth and the sky themselves are now quiet.

Gaining awareness of the deceitful nature of the great ocean of things, one dispels the illusions of the world, but one may nonetheless still be blind to the most pervading, the most entrenched, but the least visible of all illusions. Rising above a thousand things and beholding the emptiness that reigns above the surface of the ocean, it is easy to be oblivious to the presence of one last thing, one that he introduces into the vast emptiness of the skies: himself. He is the last thing that remains to be seen and left behind. He furiously moves through the clouds and the air, flying to the confines of the firmament, but no matter how fast he goes or for how long, this last thing is still with him, as much as before. The earth down below was troubled by the presence of things, but now the dragon troubles the heavens by his presence, bringing unclarity to the clear realm, throwing a thing into the place where there was no-thing,

thereby failing to see no-thing-ness.

Still deluded by his own self, the great dragon then stumbles upon one greater than him, one who sees through the waters as well as through the air, one who is intimate with the ocean as well as with the heavens, and more importantly, one who has succeeded in abandoning the last thing, playing with it rather than being played by it. The king of the birds stealthily swoops down on the dragon, holding it in its beak, like an insignificant earthworm, agitating its body but utterly powerless. Then comes the time for the great realization. When death is as clear as the summer sky in front of one's eyes, then the will to live appears as well. Feeling the impending extinction of the self, the self itself finally becomes the focus of his attention. The last thing is brought before his eyes, and he can see how he has yet to discover the essence of the sky, which is emptiness. Ceasing to resist, embracing his fate with contentment, he lets himself be swallowed whole, his life quenched, a spark falling into the sea. Clarity then returns to the heavens.

The heights of the sky may nonetheless be more obscure than the depths of the ocean. The sun may blind more completely than the darkest night. Fortunately, there is often someone ready to come down to help those in need, even if it is with seemingly harsh words or even with razor-sharp claws slashing through their skin. Seeing a creature thrashing about, wrestling with its self, he holds it down firmly, pressing it upon the earth. The one who wants freedom from the weight of the world should nevertheless first learn to carry this weight upon his shoulders, before casting it away, realizing that it is as light as a feather. It is indeed harder to rid oneself of one's shoulders than of the burden placed upon them. When it is done, there is yet nothing left to carry, and genuine freedom is then displayed throughout the firmament.

Case 92 —Yanyang's One Thing —嚴陽一物

Source: The Book of Serenity Case 57.

【中】

jǔ yán yáng zūn zhě wèn zhào zhōu yí wù bù jiāng lái shí rú hé
舉。嚴陽 尊者問 趙州：「一物不將來時如何。」
zhōu yún fàng xià zháo yán yún yí wù bù jiāng lái fàng xià
州 云：「放下著。」 嚴 云：「一物不將來，放下
gè shén me zhōu yún rèn me zé dān qǔ qù
箇甚麼。」 州 云：「恁麼則擔取去。」

【日】

舉す。巖陽尊者趙州に問う、「一物不將來の時

如何。」州云く、「放下著。」巖云く、「一物不將來

箇の甚麼をか放下せん。」州云く、「恁麼ならば擔

取し去れ。」

【E】

The Venerable Yanyang asked Zhaozhou: "How is it when someone does not have a single thing?" Zhaozhou said, "Let it go." Yanyang said, "He does not have a single thing; what could he let go?" Zhaozhou said, "If so, carry it around."

A blind man may sit upon a pile of rare jewels and gold coins and still consider himself to be poor, as he tramples this hidden wealth, considering it to be mere gravel, a hindrance on his way. Those endowed with sight may nonetheless also be blind to the limitations of their sight, and so is someone searching within the borders of the world for what does not belong to this world. Folly it is to feel compelled to use words to declare that a man has gained freedom from words or to have no other means than to hold a sign in his hands proclaiming that there is nothing he holds on to. To let go of all of our earthly possessions is not enough, nor is it sufficient to release all the things of the world to which our mind clings, such as the words uttered by our mouths or those resonating inside our heads. All this work upon ourselves is in vain if we still fail to see that what remains when all things have been abandoned, no-thing-ness, is itself a thing that occupies a place in our world, in our mind, and that it is what the man on the path may be the most intensely tempted to cling to, not even realizing that it is also a thing.[76] The man who has nothing is thus told: "Let it go!" To *have* nothing is to possess something. He opens up his mouth and a river of words gushes out of it, showing his audience the mass of things concealed within his mind, thereby showing the extent of what possesses his mind. What should be let go of is no-thing-ness itself, as an object of thought, the target of one's attention. As soon as a thought arises, no-thing-ness vanishes and we are thrown back into the world that saw our birth, surrounded by things, and where "no-thing-ness" is a mere word. To not have a single

[76]See Wansong's preface on this case: "If that is not to ride an ox to look for an ox, then it is [like] to use a wedge to remove a wedge." Chinese original: 「若非騎牛覓牛。便是以楔去楔。」From: 《萬松老人評唱天童覺和尚頌古從容庵錄》。 CBETA (Case 57).

thing, one must learn not to have, but simply to be. No-thing-ness is not a place one could venture into from the outside. It is rather only what remains when the true nature of all things has been perceived; when the boundaries separating them have been shown to be a mere creation of our mind. It is when no-thing-ness itself is forgotten that one becomes no-thing-ness, rather than a being, a thing standing out from it. No-thing-ness cannot be seized or approached. One simply has to let himself be pervaded by it, to his core, until there is nothing left, not even no-thing-ness itself.

Nevertheless, if one is blind to his own blindness, how would he show him the nature of this cecity? To see his own not seeing, he needs to be confronted with the very frontiers of his world, to stumble upon something that would not make sense unless he failed to see another dimension of his world. Asking what he should let go of, since he has nothing, he is told: "If so, carry it around," thereby only increasing his perplexity. But it is precisely this puzzlement that offers him a chance to reconsider his own predicament. What is this thing that he should carry around if he carries nothing? This "nothing" is what he can't let go of, as he fails to realize the place it occupies in his world, in his mind. A day, a year, or a lifetime may pass, but once this most inconspicuous thing is seen as clearly as the day and the fiery orb illuminating the earth, then can the grip finally be relaxed, and this thing fades into transparency. Nothing then remains, not even "no-thing."

Case 93 —Luzu Does Not Understand —魯祖不會

Source: The Book of Serenity Case 93.

【中】

jǔ lǔ zǔ wèn nán quán mó ní zhū rén bù shí rú lái
舉。魯祖 問 南泉：「『摩尼珠[1] 人不識。如來
zàng lǐ qīn shōu dé rú hé shì zàng quán yún wáng lǎo shī
藏[2] 裏親[3] 收得。』如何是藏。」泉 云：「王老師[4]
yǔ rǔ wǎng lái zhě shì zǔ yún bù wǎng lái zhě quán yún yì
與汝往來者是。」祖 云：「不往來者。」泉 云：「亦
shì zàng zǔ yún rú hé shì zhū quán zhào yún shī zǔ
是藏。」祖 云：「如何是珠。」泉 召云：「師祖。」
zǔ yìng nuò quán yún qù rǔ bú huì wǒ yǔ
5 祖 應：「諾。」泉 云：「去。汝不會我語。」

[1] 【摩尼珠】 [mó ní zhū]: "the Mani Jewel." From the Sanskrit "cintāmaṇi" (चिन्तामणि), a wish-fulfilling jewel first described in the Hindu tradition, and later becoming part of

the Buddhist one. It is commonly used as a metaphor for one's true nature, one's Buddha nature.

[2] 【如來藏】 [rú lái zàng]: "the Tathagata treasury." Translation of the Sanskrit "Tathāgatagarbha" (तथागतगर्भ). In Mahayana Buddhism, it represents the doctrine that all sentient beings have within themselves the virtue and wisdom of the Tathagata, but that this fact is obscured by the various poisons affecting them.

[3] 【親】 S:【亲】 [qīn]: "in person."

[4] 【王老師】 [wáng lǎo shī], that is, Nanquan himself.

[5] 【师祖】 [shī zǔ], that is, Luzu.

【日】

舉す。魯祖、南泉に問う、「摩尼珠人識らず、如來藏裏に親しく收得す、如何なるか是れ藏。」泉云く、「王老師汝と往來するもの是。」祖云く、「往來せざる者は。」泉云く、「亦是れ藏。」祖云く、「如何なるか是れ珠。」泉召して云く、「師祖。」祖、應諾す。泉云く、「去れ、汝我語を會せず。」

【E】

Luzu[1] asked Nanquan: "'People are not conscious of [the existence of] the Mani-Jewel.[2] I picked it up myself in the Tathagata treasury.'[3] What is this treasury?" Nanquan said, "Master Wang discusses back and forth with you. That's it." Shizu said, "How about when there is no back-and-forth discussion?" Nanquan said, "That's also the treasury." Shizu said, "What is the jewel?" Nanquan said, "Shizu!" Shizu said, "Yes!" Nanquan said, "Go! You don't understand my words."

[1] "Luzu": The name here seems to be the result of a scribal mistake, as it refers to another monk, absent from the rest of the dialogue. The name here should be Shizu.

[2] "The Mani Jewel": See note 1 of the Chinese text.

[3] "The Tathagata treasury": See note 2 of the Chinese text.

In order for the eye to observe itself, it must be confronted with the perfect clarity of a surface that reflects all that it receives, without disturbance, having no image imprinted upon itself, simply representing what surrounds it, a remarkably rare occurrence. Likewise, seldom does a man encounter someone who has left behind his own face, his mask worn in the world of men, to show others his own true face, and the eye with which he beholds all things. The eye then shines like the most finely cut jewel, and through the depths of its reflections, it is the entirety of the world that appears, just as it is, as it was and will be, no different from before, but only now seen in its radiant truth.

In the same manner, the jewel that we carry at all times with us is the prism through which we observe the earth and the skies. Each one of its thousand facets shows a thing of our world, dissecting the light of the heavens into as many rays forming an image marrying the truth of the skies with the mark of the jewels' complex shape. The world-jewel nonetheless does more than simply let through the light of the heavens, the truth of the skies. It is a wondrous thing that brings to us all that we desire. The world indeed is a brocade of truth interwoven with fantasies, and the jewel allows us to invoke the presence of anything we wish into this world. We think of something, and it appears in our head, in our dreams, but this unlimited power is meant to guide us, so that we would liberate ourselves from the yoke of our wishes and fantasies, and see all that is, just as it is.[77]

Furthermore, the substance of the jewel behind our eyes is discovered when what surrounds it is seen as it is, when the treasury where it is permanently stored finally becomes visible. This treasury encompasses the world and the earth. It embraces the entirety of the firmament. It is the place from which all things emerge, but where not a single thing is found. It is impossible to see it, and yet it pervades all, and one cannot flee from it. When one passes through the crowded, filthy streets of the world, carrying his jewel and playing with things and words, his mind busying itself with the affairs of men, it remains present, and all occurs within the invisible walls of this world. When, on the contrary, one seeks to flee the unceasing tumult of the world to take refuge in a deserted place, plunged in silence, fleeing people and their things, he is still surrounded by this treasury, still carrying the jewel within him. The treasury conceals the greatest treasure, but its presence is eclipsed by the brightness of the jewel illuminated by the light of the world. Only when the jewel is seen, seized, and thrown away may the nature of this space appear. What is the jewel? You! You

[77]See: Roloff, Dietrich. *Cong-Rong-Lu – Aufzeichnungen aus der Klause der Gelassenheit: Die 100 Kôan des Shôyôroku.* Windpferd Verlagsgesellschaft mbH, 2008. Page 480: "die magische Perle der Wunscherfüllung, und zwar zwangsläufig, zu; besteht doch die magische Wirkung der Shunyata –nichts anderes ist mit der Perle gemeint –eben darin, dass sie uns von allen Wünschen befreit. ..."

should therefore go! Run away from this jewel whose light blinds you to its presence. Flee as far as you can from it, and then the true treasure will reveal itself, without anyone to see it, without anything to see, and nothing left to understand.

Case 94 —Bajiao's Staff —芭蕉拄杖

Source: The Gateless Barrier Case 44.

【中】

bā jiāo hé shàng shì zhòng yún ěr yǒu zhǔ zhàng zi wǒ yǔ ěr zhǔ zhàng zi ěr wú zhǔ zhàng zi wǒ duó ěr zhǔ zhàng zi

芭蕉[1] 和尚示眾云：「爾有拄杖子，我與爾拄杖子；爾無拄杖子，我奪爾拄杖子。」

[1] 【芭蕉】 [bā jiāo]: a 10th century Korean monk who settled in China, whose full name is 芭蕉慧清 [bā jiāo huì qīng]. He is not to be mistaken for the famous Japanese Zen poet Matsuo Bashō (松尾芭蕉, 1644 -1694).

【日】

こ ばしょうおしょう しゅ しめ いわ なんじ しゅじょう す あ わ なんじ しゅじょうす あた なんじ しゅじょうす な わ なんじ しゅじょうす うば

擧す。芭蕉和尚、衆に示して云く、「爾に拄杖子有らば、我れ爾に拄杖子を與えん。爾に拄杖子無くんば、我れ爾が拄杖子を奪わん。」

【E】

Master Bajiao said to his congregation: "You have a staff? I will give the staff to you. You do not have a staff? I will take the staff away from you."

With our world appearing like an ancient fortress that has passed through the ages, without being damaged by the work of the skies and the hands of man, the idea that it stands secure, as something that can be absolutely relied upon, is deeply and lastingly etched in our minds. The pillars around us are monuments to certainty itself, and few will ever reflect on their foundations and the nature of the soil whereon they stand. The servant of the way is nonetheless driven out of the great

desert by torrid winds and led to return to the great fortress to show its inhabitants the danger of their long-established habits, the weakness of their ways. His walking staff in hand, he confidently advances through the dusty streets, wading through the throng as if swimming through a translucent river, not seeing a populace of rich and poor, noble or commoner, virtuous or sinner, but rather only the flow of life, one with the earth and the sky. Arriving at the base of the pillars supporting this fortress, he vigorously hits the ground with his wooden attachment, catching the attention of all gathered there as the sound of this striking loudly echoes throughout the air. What he holds in his hand is the pillar of the world, supporting the heavens.[78] It is the only thing that there is. It is a dragon that has swallowed the entire earth, all living beings, and the sky itself. It is also the weapon that will shatter the pillars of the fortress and cause the world to crumble, exposing the wobbliness of its foundations to the eyes of all its inhabitants. Under the curious gaze of the people assembled there, he then opens his mouth to let a manifestation of the way flow out of it: "There is only one thing. If you think you have it, I will show you that you do not. If you think you do not have it, I will show you that you have."

The inhabitants of the fortress abide within their certainties, but the man of the way will show them that it is through non-abiding, plunging into uncertainty and indeterminacy, that they will finally be free from their delusions. If a man considers himself to have seen the truth, it means that he still holds on to the thing we call truth, and thus remains a slave to the world of things. If a man thinks that he has gained freedom from the delusions induced by the omnipresence of the things of the world, this means that he holds on to the thing called freedom, and thus is still a prisoner of the illusory world. When one goes beyond having and not-having, sight and blindness, freedom and slavery, passing through each but abiding in neither, neither embracing nor rejecting, one will soon find out that the last thing becomes a hindrance rather than a help, an obstacle rather than a support.[79] The grip on it can at this moment be gently released. It is neither seized nor cast away, but only fiddled with, and afterwards, there is no longer any audience, pillars, or fortress. There is no staff and no one to hold it. There is no longer a need for freedom, as there is no one to free. And yet, nothing but the mind has been transformed, and *being* itself goes on its way.

[78] See Wumen's Verse concerning this case: "All the 'deep' and the 'shallow' are in one's hand. It supports the heavens and keeps the earth in place. Everywhere, it stirs up a wind of piety." Chinese original: 「諸方深與淺都在掌握中撐天并拄地隨處振宗風」, From: 《禪宗無門關》。 CBETA (Case 44).

[79] See Wumen's comment on this case: "It supports the one crossing a river when the bridge is broken. It accompanies the one returning to his village on a moonless night. If one calls it a walking staff, he enters hell as fast as an arrow." Chinese original: 「扶過斷橋水。伴歸無月村。若喚作拄杖。入地獄如箭。」, From: 《禪宗無門關》。 CBETA (Case 44).

Case 95 —This One Has Something to Say —某甲話在

Source: The Blue Cliff Record Case 54.

【中】

jǔ yún mén wèn sēng jìn lí shén chù sēng yún xī chán
舉。雲門 問僧：「近離甚處。」僧云：「西禪。」
mén yún xī chán jìn rì yǒu hé yán jù sēng zhǎn liǎng shǒu mén
門 云：「西禪 近日有何言句。」僧展兩手，門
dǎ yì zhǎng sēng yún mǒu jiǎ huà zài mén què zhǎn liǎng shǒu sēng wú
打一掌。僧云：「某甲話在。」門 却展兩手。僧無
yǔ mén biàn dǎ
語，門 便打。

【日】

こ うんもん そう と ちか いずこ はな
舉す。雲門、僧に問う、「近ごろ甚處を離れし
そういわ さいぜん もんいわ さいぜん きんじつ
や。」僧云く、「西禪。」門云く、「西禪には近日
なん ごんく あ そう りょうて の もん う
何の言句か有る。」僧、兩手を展ぶ。門、打つこ
ひらてうち そういわ それがしわあ もん かえ りょう
と一掌す。僧云く、「某甲話在り。」門、却って兩
て の そう ご な もん すなわ う
手を展ぶ。僧、語無し。門、便ち打つ。

【E】

Yunmen asked a monk: “Where have you come from?” The monk said, “Xichan.” Yunmen said, “What words does Xichan say lately?” The monk stretched out his arms. Yunmen slapped him. The monk said, “This one has something to say.” Yunmen then stretched out his own arms. The monk remained speechless. Yunmen then hit him.

Silence may speak more loudly than words. A gesture may be clearer than a lengthy scroll. It is easy to take refuge in one or the other, seeking a truth that is in the eye of the beholder, but more arduous

and more rewarding it is to master the whole palette of expression discovered by mankind, combining the use of words, wordless signs, and silence, artfully playing with them, wittingly unsettling the opponent, disarming him and returning to his throat the blade that he carelessly unsheathed. Each technique presents its dangers and power, and this is why the one lastingly abiding in either one of them is condemned to fall into a delusion, blind to his own predicament. How would one learn of these dangers, and leap over the snares, constantly moving, never abiding anywhere?

Offered a pile of words in the form of a mundane question, one may be given something unexpected, something besides words, thereby forcing its recipient to depart, for an instant, from the realm of words to venture somewhere else, and consider what links these two shores of understanding. What is the meaning of being? A finger is raised. What teaching do you offer your followers? Outstretched arms. Observing such cryptic answers, one will then feel compelled to ask himself: "What is the meaning of this?" Here is the lesson, given without opening one's mouth. There is no inherent meaning. The one observing the gesture must construct it himself, and he will never be sure of what the person who made it intended, or even if there was any intention behind it. Hearing a chain of words meticulously woven by an intelligent mind, the room for interpretation is rather limited. The meaning of each word always has somewhat blurry borders, but the men using it have established some degree of convention, agreeing on a set of definite meanings. The gestures share with words a common essence as signs, but a key difference is that they are used here for their ambiguity, the foggy nature of their contours. The outstretched arms may have a thousand meanings or none. They may designate the unity of the world with no-thing-ness, forming a single body, or they may be an invitation to pay notice to our surroundings, as if saying: "The answer that you seek, it is all around you. It is the earth and the sky itself, what you experience here and now." It may also simply be bait, to leave the novice speechless, to confuse him so as to make him wonder and see the limits of his world, the end of language, the beginning of the truth of the earth. It may also interweave these meanings together, even including meaninglessness itself, like a golden thread in a silk vestment. What the audience discovers is that there is meaning beyond words, and that there is something beyond meaning.

Lost in words, puzzled with sentences, and confused by the encounter with the silent sign, the wordless gesture, the novice remains clueless, and when he is asked about the teaching he received, like a trained monkey, he simply stretches out his arms, ingeniously passing on a teaching whose truth he failed to perceive. How is one guided back to the earth, forced to descend from the heights of this world where he is lost? A hard slap on the cheek! This is another sign, one delivered

directly to the senses, shaking up his consciousness to its core, with the pain, surprise, and humiliation forcing him to reconsider his behavior. Facing a master of the world, a lord of the earth, a man of the way, he attempts to justify himself, to drag the teacher into the heights or the mire of the world: “I have something to say about that!” Playfully jumping from world to earth, the master is nonetheless not caught off guard, and he drags back the disciple to the realm of the senses, the earth, appealing to his sense of sight by simply outstretching his arms, once again plunging the novice into utter amazement. This is what your teacher was showing you! What you still fail to see! With another slap, he receives the seal of the hand of the teacher, imprinted on his reddened face. You sought a million answers, but just look, they are all there, in front of your eyes, all around you. It is just this.

Case 96 —The World-Honored One Ascends the Rostrum —世尊升座

Source: The Blue Cliff Record Case 92.

This case is identical to Book of Serenity, case 1.

【中】

jǔ shì zūn yí rì shēng zuò wén shū bái chuí yún dì guān fǎ
舉。世尊 一日陞座，文殊 白槌云：「諦觀法
wáng fǎ fǎ wáng fǎ rú shì shì zūn biàn xià zuò
王法，法王法如是。」世尊 便下座。

【日】

こ せそん いちじつ ざ のぼ もんじゅ びゃくつい
舉す。世尊、一日、座に陞る。文殊、白槌し
いわ ほうおう ほう たいかん ほうおう ほう こ
て云く、「法王の法を諦観せよ、法王の法は是の
ごと せそん すなわ ざ くだ
如しと。」世尊、便ち座を下る。

【E】

One day, the World-Honored One ascended to the rostrum. Manjushri struck the gavel and said, “Contemplate with great care the Dharma of the Dharma-King! The Dharma of the Dharma-King is like this.” The World-Honored One then descended from the rostrum.

What the people want may often differ from what the people need. Eager for instruction, men may need it to be denied to them, allowing the tumultuous torrent of thoughts passing through their minds to dwindle, calmed by the work of time. Yearning for words of wisdom, they may need to be given silence, the opportunity to hear what is found in between such words. When mouths are shut, ears finally open, the melodious songs of nature are listened to, and the commands of the heavens can now be hearkened.

Some men thus want to become intimate with the way, seeing it with their own eyes, treading it with their bare feet. They call upon the heavens for a sign, someone to guide their steps, and then someone approaches, advancing slowly, walking on the bare earth as the clouds hover over his head and the sun floods them all with a river of brilliance that illuminates the innermost part of their eyes. He climbs to an elevated position to be equally seen by all, and the gaze of the people is focused upon his face. Then, the gavel is struck, and a deafening sound suddenly breaks the silence that reigned until then upon this small part of the earth. An anomaly is heard, something that stands out of the silence. This wave, going through the sky and into the ears of those gathered there, attracts the attention of all, and it not only reveals the nature of the air through which it passes, or awakens the sense of hearing that was numbed by the absence of sound, but it also reveals the contrast between sound and silence. It represents a sign, whose meaning is left to the hearer to interpret, but even after it has faded into silence, silence itself is changed by its passage, heard with a new dimension. Striking the gavel, stirring up a great wave in the sky, it is the entirety of the heavens that is revealed by this sign, despite or perhaps thanks to its most rudimentary nature. Nothing else is needed in order for everything to be understood.[80]

The envoy of the way nonetheless continues to face the crowd, impassively, without the faintest sound, without the slightest movement, with no sign whatsoever offered to them. A voice then resounds: "The teaching of the man of the way is like this!" And nothing more occurs. Silence and stillness reign upon the earth, as the winds sweep the earth with a faint murmur. The way is nowhere else than here and now. It is to be found within us, through the realization that there is no inside or outside, no "us" and no "him." The eyes of the guide are then found to be an abyss. His mouth is a bottomless canyon. All that it shows is no-thing, an incarnation of the way, an embodiment of no-thing-ness

[80]See Yuanwu's preface to this case: "One string is plucked, and the tune is recognized." Chinese original: 「動絃別曲。」, From: 《佛果圜悟禪師碧巖錄》。CBETA (Case 92).

itself, attracting others to it, in the same manner as the earth pulls down all that approaches it to its face. In the ocean of things of the world, he is an island of no-thing-ness, an anomaly that breaks the mundanity of the world. He shatters the "thingness" of the world, interrupting it with a moment where no-thing is displayed on the earth and in the skies. His presence is a testimony to the vacuity of the world and to the majesty of emptiness. He brings contrast to this world, revealing both the nature of the world and the nature of no-thing-ness. Through his presence, it is the nature of the whole of the earth and the skies that is once again revealed. He is the doorway through which the truth of being may be perceived and experienced, an exit point to leave the illusory world and discover the truth that it concealed. His coming was, all the same, superfluous, as everything could already be heard in the sound of the gavel. What the gavel revealed with a sound, he reveals with a sight, but both are mere reflections of the truth of the way. Nothing more is to be heard or seen, and thus, the envoy descends to join the crowd, letting himself be dissolved in it, leaving no-thing to be seen, and everything to be perceived.

Case 97 —The Bodhisattva Strikes the Lectern —大士揮案

Source: The Blue Cliff Record Case 67.

【中】

jǔ liáng wǔ dì qǐng fù dà shì jiǎng jīn gāng jīng dà shì biàn yú
舉。梁武帝請傅大士講金剛經。大士便於
zuò shàng huī àn yí xià biàn xià zuò wǔ dì è rán zhì gōng
座上，揮案[1] 一下，便下座。武帝愕然。[2] 誌公
wèn bì xià hái huì ma dì yún bú huì zhì gōng yún dà
問：「陛下還會麼。」帝云：「不會。」誌公云：「大
shì jiǎng jīng jìng
士講經竟。」

[1] 【揮案】 [huī àn]: "to strike a lectern." This striking was probably done with a stick used as a pointer for reading, similar to the "yad" used in Jewish synagogues for the reading of scriptures.

[2] 【愕然】 [è rán]: "to be stunned" / "to be amazed."

【日】

こ りょう ぶ てい ふ だい し しょう こんごうきょう こう
舉す。梁の武帝、傅大士を請じて金剛經を講ぜ
だい しすなわ ざじょう おい つくえ はら ひとたび
しむ。大士便ち座上に於て、案を揮うこと一下し

すなわ　ざ　くだ　ぶ ていがくぜん　し こう と　へいか
て、便ち座を下る。武帝愕然たり。誌公問う、「陛下
は　え　ていいわ　え　し こういわ　だい
還た會すや。」帝云く、「會せず。」誌公云く、「大
し こぎょう　おわ
士講經し竟んぬ。」

【E】

Emperor Wu of Liang invited Bodhisattva Fu and asked him to give a talk on the Diamond Sutra. The Bodhisattva then ascended the rostrum, struck the lectern once, and descended. Emperor Wu was stunned. Zhigong asked him: "Did Your Majesty understand?" The emperor said, "I didn't understand [anything]." Zhigong said, "The Bodhisattva has finished explaining the Sutra."

For those exalted by the world, surrounded by riches and living their days in palaces covered in gold, furnished with the life work of the most skillful craftsmen, wearing majestic clothes that are the fruit of countless days of labor of the people they rule over, possessing all things one could wish for, it is easy to become blind to the nature of what these things are made of, and of the nature of what is seldom looked upon when the eye is constantly attracted to the earth, to these shiny possessions that keep one busy, that is, the all-encompassing heavens above. The emperor of the Middle Kingdom may be called the son of heaven, but a peasant strenuously tilling his fields in the countryside has a more intimate contact with the sky, and he is in a better position to realize the essence of the all-encompassing realm, the truth of being. The son of heaven thus needs more specific guidance, a more direct instruction.

How can one teach the scripture preaching that there is no reader and nothing to read, but rather only no-thing-ness? There is no-thing to teach, and no one to whom it could be taught. The words are there to point out the way to go, even though they are powerless to bring someone there. But clearer than words is a direct display, an exhibition of no-thing-ness, one that may strike a chord and resonate through one's soul.[81]

Ascending to the rostrum, the guide from beyond the middle kingdom, one for whom there are no "sons of the earth" or a "son of

[81]See: 吳平。《新譯碧巖集》。台北：三民書局股份有限公司, 2005:「自身也是一部活經卷。」

heaven", is no-thing-ness incarnate. No-thing-ness is deaf and dumb. It is utterly devoid of words and concepts. It does not separate the self from the other, the inside from the outside. There is no meaning to the actions of the guide incarnating no-thing-ness because he embodies the place into which meaning cannot be brought. His appearance is nonetheless like that of any other man. He seems to be a creature of the world like countless others, a thing belonging to this realm standing among innumerable other things. Those not endowed with a curious eye will fail to see what is shown to them. No-thing-ness is indeed not a place away from the world, and the world is not distant from no-thing-ness. Both are inextricably interwoven. The world is, in its essence, no-thing-ness, and no-thing-ness is the essence of the world. The mind creates the illusion of their separation, an illusion that allows us to reason and build up this world for our benefit, but when the foundation is hidden from man's sight, he forgets what his world is, and the place it occupies in his existence. He becomes oblivious to the truth of being, and loses sight of his destiny.

The guide then strikes the lectern, in a swift, precise movement. A sound echoes throughout the air, slowly fading into silence. This is the truth preached by the scriptures, brought directly to the eyes and the ears of the son of heaven. When does the movement start and end? When is the sound-wave stirred up and when does it disappear? There is no absolute delimiting line for either. The arm was raised before the birth of the earth, and it has yet to end its course. The sound began with the unfolding of the heavens themselves, and it still faintly resonates into our ears, if we listen to it attentively enough. There is no beginning or end, no sound or silence, no movement or stillness. This is the essence of the scripture. We create these things in order to attempt to understand no-thing-ness, to fathom the nature of being, but there is no-thing to understand, and no-thing-ness cannot be understood. When the arm of the guide is seen, and the sound heard, then there is nothing left, and he descends from the rostrum. Stunned, the son of heaven declares that he does not understand what has occurred. Simple or wise, they would have the same answer. To not understand is to be on the right track. To understand is to stray away, as it shows that one is still a prisoner of the delusion that there is something to be understood, or someone that can understand, while there is only no-thing. There is no-thing around, no-thing within. We are everything and no-thing, beautifully fused, indistinguishable, all sons of heaven and earth, builders of an illusory world, on top of which we proudly stand, gazing at the stars illuminating the summer sky, seeing our face in them.

Case 98 —The Man of Great Strength —大力量人

Source: The Gateless Barrier Case 20.

【中】

sōng yuán hé shàng yún dà lì liàng rén yīn shén tái jiǎo bù qǐ
松源 和尚云：「大力量人因甚擡[1] 脚不起。」
yòu yún kāi kǒu bú zài shé tóu shàng
又云：「開口不在舌頭上。」

[1] 【擡】 [tái]: variant of 抬 [tái], meaning: “to lift” / “to raise.”

【日】

こ しょうげんおしょういわ だいりきりょうひと な
擧す。松源和尚云く、「大力量の人、甚んに
よ あし もた お またいわ くち
因ってか脚を擡げ起こさざる。」又云く、「口を
ひら ぜっとうじょう あ
開くこと舌頭上に在らず。」

【E】

Songyuan asked: “Why can’t the man of great strength lift up his legs?” And he also said, “Speech does not necessarily come from the tongue.”

Strength is a measure of one’s ability to act upon the earth or the world, a gradation associated with words marking the passing of arbitrary thresholds such as “little” or “great.” It may find itself manifested upon the earth, but it belongs to the world. Beyond its boundaries, strength and weakness have no existence. An ant is strong when it lifts up a piece of leaf, and the sun’s fiery rays are strong as well when they hit our skin damaged by the dry summer air. One who has been enlightened by the effulgence of the heavens is someone who sees beyond the opposition between strength and weakness, beyond greatness and smallness. His strength resides in his ability to let himself be carried upon the way of the sky, without resistance, without hurry, without will. He lets the thoughts arising in his mind freely come and go without grasping them, like gentle oscillations on the surface of a lake undisturbed by the winds

blowing throughout the sky, the tremors of the earth, or the hustle and bustle of the world. His strength lies in his absence of use of strength, his going on with the flow of nature.

The strength of the enlightened is therefore concealed from the eyes of the world. For its inhabitants, he is weak and ridiculed. He himself declares his impotence to them: “I cannot even lift one of my legs.” This statement of impotence to the world is nonetheless a pledge of fidelity and devotion to the way of the sky itself. To be unable to lift up one’s leg is a manifestation of the abandonment of his own will. To the world, he is a fool and a liar, as they see him walking like any other man. He is the most truthful reflection of the heavens found in this deceitful world. When he moves, it is the way itself that moves his limbs. His mind is clear and still, and the mere idea of the lifting of a leg has been thrown into the depths of his memory. All that he does is let himself be guided by nature itself, thus embodying the strength of the heavens as a whole, more powerful than the will of any living being.

Like any other dweller of the world, he is thus heard speaking by other men, with long chains of words heard from his direction as they slip into their ears. His hand dances with a quill, leaving trails of sooty ink on sheets of paper that are attentively read by others. And yet, his tongue remains still, and his arm does not move an inch. The speech that comes out of his mouth is not formed by his tongue or constructed by his mind. The letters that are found upon his desk are not written by his hand or conceived by his reason. He is a mere instrument, no different from the air or the ink. His actions are a mere natural reaction to his surroundings, without him letting his opinions or thoughts influence them. All that appears to come from him comes from the way itself, of which he is more than a part, but rather a doorway, to its entirety, accessible to all those who find themselves in contact with him. His strength cannot be measured, and it can be shared with all, without it finding itself diminished or weakened. All are invited to partake in it, and all are destined to succeed in becoming beings of great strength.

Case 99 —A Ball on a Torrent of Water —急水上打球子

Source: The Blue Cliff Record Case 80.

【中】

jǔ sēng wèn zhào zhōu chū shēng hái zi huán jù liù shí yě wú
舉。僧問趙州：「初生孩子，還具六識[1]也無。」
zhào zhōu yún jí shuǐ shàng dǎ qiú zi sēng fù wèn tóu zǐ jí shuǐ
趙州云：「急水上打毬子。」僧復問投子：「急水

shàng dǎ qiú zi yì zhī rú hé zǐ yún niàn niàn bù tíng liú
上打毬子，意旨如何。」子云：「念念不停流。」

[1] 【六識】 [liù shí]: "the six consciousnesses," tied to the six senses of Buddhist philosophy: the visual, auditory, olfactory, gustatory, and tactile senses, in addition to consciousness.

【日】

こ そう じょうゅう と うまれたて あかご は ろく
擧す。僧、趙州に問う、「初生の孩子は還た六
しき ぐ や じょうゅういわ きゅうすじょう きゅうす
識を具する也無。」趙州云く、「急水上に毬子を
う そう ま とうす と きゅうすじょう きゅうす
打つ。」僧、復た投子に問う、「急水上に毬子を
う い し いかん す いわ ねんねん なが
打つと、意旨は如何。」子云く、「念念、流れを
とど
停めず。」

【E】

A monk asked Zhaozhou: "Does a newborn infant already have the Six Forms of Consciousness[1] or not?" Zhaozhou said, "Throwing a ball on a torrent of water." The monk also asked Touzi: "What does 'throwing a ball on the swift current' mean?" Touzi said, "The flow of thoughts unceasingly runs."

[1] "The six forms of consciousness": See note 1 of the Chinese text.

An infant is born into the world when his senses are awakened, unleashing a manifold flow that seeps into his body, through his eyes, his ears, his nose, his tongue, and his skin, entering his mind and touching his consciousness. A man who has experienced the great death, the extinction of the self, is reborn into no-thing-ness but is not severed from the world of men, and from the realm of the senses. He is still very much human, far from a senseless piece of rock. He sees, feels, smells, hears, tastes, and thinks, with the torrent of the senses entering his mind just like in any other animal, but unlike the infant, who eagerly drinks this flow and uses it to build up a world, turning the work of the senses into countless things, cutting off the seamless unity of nature into building blocks that he can grasp with his mind or his hands, the newborn into

no-thing-ness, the one who has perceived the truth of the way of the sky, lets the torrent of the senses pass him through, not feeling compelled to make any use of it, letting it simply erode the pillars of his world day by day, year by year, until nothing is left of them.

To be reborn as a man of the way thus is to be a ball thrown on a torrent of water. A sphere is the most rudimentary shape, the one most fitting to be easily carried by the flow. It has no up or down, no left or right, no limbs with which it could swim against the current or be caught on the shores. It simply floats, taken to its destination. From the point of view of this sphere, the waters upon which it floats appear perfectly still, as it harmoniously moves with it. It is the world built upon the shores and the land that appear in constant motion, without any point of view being truer than any other. A man acquainted with no-thing-ness knows that seemingly still waters may conceal strong currents,[82] and that, likewise, a violent torrent may appear like an expanse of still waters. Only when observed from either the flow or the shore does the distinction arise, but when one embodies no-thing-ness itself, there is no longer any particular point of view, as there is no self, no shore or flow, only the unicity of all that is, no longer perceived as a "thing" itself.

To perceive one's oneness with the way yet does not occur through a severance from the flux of the senses —from a rejection of the world into which we were thrown at birth —but rather through the perception of the vacuous nature of what surrounds us. It, however, does not present itself as a gloomy realization or a nihilistic vision, but rather as a glorious revelation of the unicity of all nature, with ourselves not being mere things caught in the flow of the way of the sky, but being the way itself, the underlying essence of the world, life, the earth, and the sky. The senses are indeed a mere reflection of the earth and the sky, an imprint left by nature itself upon our malleable bodies. What enshrouds this truth of nature in a veil of shadows is the flow of our thoughts, unceasingly trying to cut the torrent running down the way, like someone trying to cut a river into pieces. This is what happens when one tries to understand what the ball or the flow is, when one need only thoughtlessly throw oneself into the water, forgetting his limbs, letting go of his will, and then, he will receive the answer he sought, letting it pass through his mind, and he will subsequently let it run away from him.

Case 100 —Throughout the Entire Body, There Are Hands and Eyes —通身是手眼

Source: The Blue Cliff Record Case 89.

[82] See: 吳平。《新譯碧巖集》。台北：三民書局股份有限公司, 2005. Page 854:「靜中有動」.

This case is identical to the Book of Serenity, case 54.

【中】

jǔ yún yán wèn dào wú dà bēi pú sà yòng xǔ duō shǒu
舉。雲巖問道吾：「大悲菩薩，[1] 用許多手
yǎn zuò shén me wú yún rú rén yè bàn bèi shǒu mō zhěn zi yán
眼作什麼。」吾云：「如人夜半背手摸枕子。」巖
yún wǒ huì yě wú yún rǔ zuò me shēng huì yán yún biàn
云：「我會也。」吾云：「汝作麼生會。」巖云：「遍
shēn shì shǒu yǎn wú yún dào jí tài shā dào zhī dào dé bā
身是手眼。」吾云：「道即太殺道，[2] 只道得八
chéng yán yún shī xiōng zuò me shēng wú yún tōng shēn shì
成。」巖云：「師兄作麼生。」吾云：「通身[3] 是
shǒu yǎn
手眼。」

[1] 【大悲菩薩】[dà bēi pú sà]: “the Bodhisattva of Great Compassion,” that is, Guānyīn (觀音), meaning “the one who perceives the sounds of the world.” She is a Bodhisattva associated with compassion, and the Chinese representation of Avalokiteśvara (अवलोकितेश्वर).

[2] 【太殺】S:【太杀】[tài shā]: “too explicitly” / “too much.” The Japanese version uses the character 煞 instead, whose meaning is similar here. The same use can be seen in the 68th case.

[3] 【遍身】[biàn shēn]: It designates the entire surface of the body, whereas 通身 [tōng shēn] also includes what is contained by the skin, the entirety of the flesh.

【日】

こ うんがん どうご と だいひぼさつ あまた
舉す。雲巖、道吾に問う、「大悲菩薩は許多の
て め もち なに な われいわ ひと
手眼を用いて、什麼をか作す。」吾云く、「人の
やはん うしろで まくら さぐ ごと がんいわ わが
夜半に背手して枕子を摸るが如し。」巖云く、「我
え われいわ なんじ いかに え がんいわ へん
會せり。」吾云く、「汝作麼生か會す。」巖云く、「遍
しん こ しゅがん われいわ い すなわ
身是れ手眼なり。」吾云く、「道うことは即ち
はなは い た はちわり い え がん
太煞だ道うも、只だ八成を道い得たるのみ。」巖
いわ す ひん いかん われいわ つうしん こ しゅがん
云く、「師兄は作麼生。吾云く、「通身是れ手眼な
り。」

【E】

Yunyan asked Daowu: "What does the Bodhisattva of the Great Compassion[1] use so many hands and eyes for?" Daowu said, "It is like a man in the middle of the night, reaching with his hand behind his head for his pillow." Yunyan said, "I understand." Daowu said, "How do you understand it?" Yunyan said, "All over the body, there are hands and eyes." Daowu said, "This describes it pretty well, but that says about eight-tenths of it." Yunyan said, "How would the Elder Brother describe it?" Daowu said, "Throughout the entire body, there are hands and eyes."

[1] "The Bodhisattva of Great Compassion": See note 1 of the Chinese text.

To whom does the compassionate express his compassion when he is alone, and who will be compassionate to him? To be compassionate is to see one's own face in the eyes of others, see through the illusory barrier that appears to separate the self from those in front of us, forgetting one's interest, as one knows that there is no one who could benefit from our actions. When these barriers have fallen, we, despite this fact, become blind, unable to grasp the things surrounding us. We are in utter darkness, as if we woke up from a dream in the heart of the night, disquieted, groping for our pillow in the hope of soon returning to the realm of dreams, where our sight will be restored, even if it is fed with pure illusions and complete falsehoods. The dream is, even so, true blindness. The sight of the awakened is perfectly clear, but as he is plunged in the darkest hours of the night, the obscurity that he beholds is only an image of the truth of the skies. The only thing that is there to reach is the doorway back to the land of slumber, the world of dreams. His senses are awake. The shadows and silence of the night seep into his mind. It is the emptiness that is the basis of nature itself that is revealed by the retreat of the gilded star under the surface of the earth. With no-thing to see, the other senses are put at the forefront of his consciousness. With no-thing to hear, taste, or smell, all that remains is his skin, his sense of touch, the raw contact with the earth that reminds him of his own nature. His entire body is a doorway into which an uninterrupted flow passes to reach the depths of his mind. He is nothing but a sensor, a hole where the flow of nature swirls. The awareness of this state of fact triggers a transformation, as he realizes that the light of the day usually dulls the fullness of his senses, concealing the richness of his own body. In each instant of our lives, we should stand in awe and ecstasy as we feel the flow entering our flesh from the entirety of the surface of

our flesh, expressed in five different dimensions corresponding to our five senses. Aware that we are but an eye of nature, we then see all other sentient beings as nothing but different parts of the same body. The compassion we manifest toward them is simply a form of consideration for our own body, and thus we are at peace with all creatures.

Awareness of the nature of the senses can for all that come in gradation. To perceive the nature of one's bodily envelope may only be a prelude to a fuller realization of the nature of one's self. When the skin is slashed, the limbs maimed, or the flesh wounded, and one notices that the inside of the body is just as much a hole into which the flow of nature penetrates as the surface of the skin or the other senses, one is led to realize that his senses are more than a doorway separating the world from consciousness, and that there is no inside or outside of the body. We are not beings covered in sensors offering us knowledge of the earth and the sky. We are mere sensors covering the body of the heavens themselves, with the entirety of our being as an act of perception. We are the eyes and the hands of the sky, and we are nothing outside of the great body that it forms. The sky itself is a gigantic eye observing itself. All that it sees is no-thing, sheer darkness, and yet it floods all that is with boundless compassion.[83]

Case 101 —The Substance and Use of the Prajna Wisdom —般若體用

Source: The Blue Cliff Record Case 90.

【中】

jǔ sēng wèn zhì mén rú hé shì bō rě tǐ mén yún bàng
舉。僧問智門:「如何是般若體。」[1] 門云:「蚌[2]
hán míng yuè sēng yún rú hé shì bō rě yòng mén yún tù zi
含明月。」僧云:「如何是般若用。」門云:「兔子
huái tāi
懷胎。」

[1] 【般若體】[bō rě tǐ]: "the substance of the Prajña Wisdom." Composed of 般若 [bō rě] "Prajña Wisdom," from the Sanskrit "Prajña" (प्रज्ञ). In a Buddhist context, it in particular

[83] See: Yamada, Kou'un, *Hekiganroku (Blue Cliff Record)* [Unpublished manuscript]: "The entire universe is an eye, in which case there is neither seeing nor being seen; there is no one who sees and nothing which is seen since they are completely one. The entire universe is an ear since it is totally one." Original Japanese: 「ここも全身・全宇宙是れ眼、全宇宙一つのマナコです。そうすると見る相手がない。見るものもない。なぜなら一つだから。そうすると見るということはない。私は見不到と言わないで、見なし・無見・あるいは非見と言いたいのです。次の「通身是れ耳、聞不及」も、いまのと同じく、全身が是れ耳、宇宙一杯の耳、ただ一つです。」From: 山田耕雲。《碧岩集提唱山田耕雲》。[Unpublished manuscript].

designates the wisdom of non-discrimination (無分別智), given to those who are in a state of release of the ego (無我) and no-mind (無心); 體 [tǐ] "the body" / "the essence" / "the substance." It can be seen as being in contrast to 用 [yòng], "the use," but both are one when seen through the lens of non-discriminating wisdom, reflecting the truth of being.

[2] 【蚌】 [bàng]: "mussel" / "clam."

【日】

舉す。僧、智門に問う、「如何なるか是れ般若の體。門云く、「蚌、名月を含む。」僧云く、「如何なるか是れ般若の用。」門云く、「兎子懷胎す。」

【E】

A monk asked Zhimen: "What is the substance of the Prajna Wisdom?"[1] Zhimen said, "The clam encompasses the bright moon."[2] The monk asked: "What is the use of the Prajna Wisdom?" Zhimen said, "A [female] rabbit carries a child in her womb."[3]

[1] "The Prajna Wisdom": See note 1 of the Chinese text.

[2] "The clam encompasses the bright moon": A Chinese metaphor expressing how a pearl is formed.

[3] "A female rabbit carries a child in her womb": According to the Chinese tradition, the light of the moon can cause clams to grow pearls and female rabbits to become pregnant (Source: 明茅樗《新刻增集紀驗田家五行田家雜佔》, CBETA: 「談叢：中秋無月則兔不孕，蚌不胎，蕎麥不實。兔望月而孕，蚌望月而胎，蕎麥得月則秀。」)

The wisdom of the world endows man with an understanding of the pieces of machinery formed by this world. To discover the essence of the heavens, the truth of being, demands that one let go of such wisdom, abandoning the distinctions between things, a distinction that is the foundation of this realm built by the hands and the mind of our kind, without becoming mere stone, remaining a living creature, but one that carries death inside its body as much as life itself.

The soft glow illuminating the heavens and the earth, the silvery gleam of the moon, appears in every body of water found in the land once the day has folded into night, shining equally in the eyes of all the living, and yet it remains one, a single luminous body, a pearl adorning the heavens, immutably reigning over the night and the darkness enfolding

the creation. To relinquish the wisdom of the world is to open up one's mind to this light from above, like a clam forgetting the dangers of the seas and the coasts, opening up its shell to let itself be pervaded by this gentle brilliance, letting the reflection of the celestial body appear on its own. This light is what is found beyond the things of the world, the essence of the heavens, what is seen when all things have been left behind: no-thing-ness itself.

When one is acquainted with the wisdom of the sky, and is familiar with the subtle mystery of the essence of being, beyond words and things, he may then let it become part of himself, as the center of his world, even though it always was and forever is the essence of all that is, whether sentient beings are aware of it or not. The light of the night abides inside the open shell, and little by little, the fleeting image of the moon becomes part of the clam's body, becoming a shiny pearl in the midst of its flesh. Welcoming no-thing-ness inside its world, no-thing-ness then takes root in this world. The foundation of all things appears inside the things themselves. The life growing amidst death becomes host to death itself, as the dead pearl becomes part of the living body of the clam. World and no-thing-ness become interlaced, inextricably bound to one another. The moon is encompassed by the shell, and the shell is enfolded in the radiance of the celestial body. The unicity of their nature becomes manifest, while they still appear distinct in the eyes of the world, as the sentient being plays with both, knowing they are one.

One may nonetheless wonder: if the substance of the heavenly wisdom is carried within oneself, what is its use? The heavens know no difference between substance and use, as these only exist as things within man's world. The heavens have no use, as they have no substance, but are nothing but a vast emptiness, even though our eyes see them as filled with countless stars, clouds, or light. And yet, when the animal that we are gazes at the great abyss enfolding our world, this boundless sky, seeing that there is only no-thing-ness beyond the frontiers of our mind, only a totality, a whirlwind without head or tail, without source or destination, we are imbued with no-thing-ness itself. It grows within us, becoming us, swallowing us from the inside, and then, in turn, becomes ready to give birth and swallow our world whole.

One who has allowed the essence of the heavens to dwell within him, letting himself be transformed by it, thus carries life as much as death each instant of his existence, and he may feel compelled to share his gift with the world. Countless clams are arrayed on the craggy shores bordering the great ocean, and yet, few of them contain a precious pearl, image of the silvery luminary of the night. This hidden wealth will not be inherited directly by their offspring. Another pearl will have to be grown inside them if they let themselves become the hosts of the heavenly radiance. Familiarity with no-thing-ness is indeed not

transmitted by blood, but some may nonetheless perceive that there is no life or death in no-thing-ness, as this is but an illusion of our world. The revelation of the truth of the skies may itself become living, sprouting out of the body impregnated by the heavens themselves, running swiftly throughout the world of men, offering them a vision of their own nature, a contact with no-thing-ness itself, at the root of all things. The wisdom of the heavens may therefore spread through the world, robbing those considering themselves wise of their certainties, clearing their minds as a blank page upon which no-thing is to be written, but only contemplated as it is. This creature will impregnate others, and soon, the world itself will be conquered by it. The moon will be enthroned in the midst of the world, with its image reflected in the eyes of all its dwellers, all concealing within themselves a living pearl, while they themselves will be dead to the world, and the world one with the heavens.

Case 102 —Baling's Sharpest Sword —巴陵吹毛劍

Source: The Blue Cliff Record Case 100.

【中】

jǔ sēng wèn bā líng rú hé shì chuī máo jiàn líng yún shān hú zhī zhī chēng zhe yuè

舉。僧問巴陵：「如何是吹毛劍。」陵云：「珊瑚枝枝撐[2]著月。」

[1] 【吹毛劍】 [chuī máo jiàn]: This word literally means "the sword [that cuts as easily as] blowing a hair," that is, something that effortlessly cuts out something that is one in two, and subsequently many things, like when a hair is cut by simply being left on the sharp edge of the blade.

[2] 【撐】 S:【撑】 [chēng]: "to support."

【日】

こ そう はりょう と いか こ すいもう けん りょういわ さんご ししつきささ

舉す。僧、巴陵に問う、「如何なるか是れ吹毛劍。」陵云く、「珊瑚は枝枝に月を撐著う。」

【E】

A monk asked Baling: "What is the blown hair sword?"[1] Baling said, "Each branch of a coral supports the moon."

[1] "The blown hair sword": See note 1 of the Chinese text.

A sword extended in the clear, azure sky —such is the mind of man. Furiously agitated in the air, the one wielding it uses this sharp weapon of war to dissect the unicity of the heavens. He cuts the sun and the moon into pieces and separates the stars into constellations. He cleaves the clouds and slashes the winds and the rain. The blade turns oneness into a multitude. It transforms a solid block into a myriad of things, more numerous than the hair growing upon our heads. As easily as a single strand of hair is blown away by the gusts blowing over the earth, so does this sword cut the skies and what they contain into a world made of innumerable things. Man's accomplishments are, even so, only an illusion. No matter how sharp his sword is, how acute the combination of his reason and perception, he is powerless to change the nature of the heavens. His sword cannot reach them, and only in his mind do the pieces forming his world exist as such. For him to discover this, he must still turn the weapon upon himself, shattering the mask covering his face, plunging deep into his flesh, and spilling his blood over the earth. Only when the self is extinguished, that is, when death is not merely something around us but something we become one with, may the moon's face be unveiled in the heavens, and our true self appear.

Among the things of the world cut out by the sword of reason, we also find every living being, including ourselves. Thinking that we are different from others, we thus fail to perceive what life is. Life began in the ocean, as a bewitching of the earth, a wedge driven between earth and sky but marrying them both in a new form, spreading over sea and land through eons, generation after generation, before the gift of the sword of reason was offered to the living. Each sentient being uses it to erect his world, cutting out the heavens into pieces, the moon into slices, easy to comprehend, easy to grasp. They form a single being passing through the ages, covering the earth, like a coral reef with countless branches extended toward the night sky, and in which the reflection of the whole moon may be observed. Each branch appears to possess and support the entirety of the luminary of the night, just as men consider themselves to be the center point of their world. But in the same manner, each branch also partakes of the entirety of the moon, just like each man partakes of the entirety of the essence of the heavens, the truth of being. When this truth is experienced, the truth of the image appears as clearly as what it represents. The reflection of the moon becomes one with the moon itself. The illusions of the world are merged with the truth of the sky. The branches of the coral reef uphold the heavens, just as the heavens support the earth and the life growing over it. The mind of man allows the heavens to be seen, and the moon is like the pupil of the skies, observing life on earth, with no distinction between seer and seen, between image and object, between the cluttered nature of our world

and the serene emptiness of the skies.

Case 103 —Ruiyan's Fundamental, Everlasting Principle —瑞巖常理

Source: The Book of Serenity Case 75.

【中】

jǔ ruì yán wèn yán tóu rú hé shì běn cháng lǐ tóu yún dòng yě yán yún dòng shí rú hé tóu yún bù jiàn běn cháng lǐ yán zhù sī tóu yún kěn jí wèi tuō gēn chén bù kěn jí yǒng chén shēng sī

舉。瑞巖 問巖頭：「如何是本常理。」頭云：「動也。」巖 云：「動時如何。」頭 云：「不見本常理。」巖 佇思，[1] 頭 云：「肯即未脱根塵，[2] 不肯即永沈[3] 生死。」

[1] 【佇思】S:【伫思】 [zhù sī]: "to ponder silently."

[2] 【根塵】 S:【根尘】 [gēn chén]: "the roots and the dust [particles]." The "six roots" are the six sensory "organs" of Buddhism: eye, ear, nose, tongue, body, and consciousness. The "six dust [particles]" are what is perceived by the six senses: form, sound, smell, taste, touching sensation, and things of the mind.

[3] 【沈】 [chén]: "to be immersed."

【日】

こ ずいがん がんとう と いか こ ほん じょう り とういわ どう がんいわ どう とき いかん とういわ ほんじょう り み がん ちょし とういわ うけが とき すなわ ま こんじん だっ うけが とき なが しょうじ しず

舉す。瑞巖、巖頭に問う、「如何なるか是れ本常の理。」頭云く、「動ぜり。」巖云く、「動の時如何。」頭云く、「本常の理を見ず。」巖、佇思す。頭云く、「肯う時は即ち未だ根塵を脱せず、肯わざる時は永く生死に沈む。」

【E】

Ruiyan asked Yantou: "What is the fundamental, everlasting principle?" Yantou said, "It has moved." Ruiyan said, "When it has moved, what then?" Yantou said, "You can't see the fundamental, everlasting principle." Ruiyan

pondered this silently. Yantou then said, "If one acknowledges it, he has not released the burden of the roots and their dust.[1] If one does not acknowledge it, he remains caught in the eternal flow of birth and death."

[1] "The roots and their dust": See note 2 of the Chinese text.

The inquisitive mind searching for the way of the sky is a cascade of thoughts, emerging and fading continuously, like waves whose crests and troughs unceasingly rise and fall. It constantly attempts to snatch something that keeps slipping away, and thus knows no peace. Trying to seize what does not belong to the earth, and to see what is not contained by the sky, one is condemned to fail and be left frustrated. Searching for the fundamental, everlasting principle of nature, the ground upon which the world itself stands but which escapes scrutiny, he sees its traces all over the things around him. He can almost see and touch it, but as soon as he approaches closer and it is about to be revealed to him, it moves away, always a step ahead of him, like a skittish deer spotted from far away in a dense forest, hiding in the shadows as soon as a leaf is trampled and the faintest sound echoes through the air. The fundamental principle then vanishes, completely invisible to the mind, leaving the inquirer perplexed and disappointed.

The fundamental essence of the heavens, likewise, presents such characteristics. It is the ground upon which the world is built, the vast and void, the place where there is not a single thing, and yet that supports all things, no-thing-ness itself. To try to grasp no-thing-ness with the mind is to attempt to transform no-thing into a thing, forcing the entirety of all that is into an exiguous box with a name attached to it, so that it would be easily seized and used. But the grandest container can itself not be contained. The all-encompassing heavens cannot be encompassed by the mind, but only caricatured. When such a caricature is crafted and grasped, man is tempted to see it as a sign of his mastery of no-thing-ness, but it rather only proclaims his blindness to the nature of his world, to the work of his mind, and to the nature of the thing he holds on to. He shows that he has yet to release the burden of his senses and his consciousness, and of the illusions associated with them.

The man who acknowledges familiarity with no-thing-ness is therefore deluded, but a man who does not acknowledge the nature of no-thing-ness is still caught in the fetters of the world, prisoner of life and death, right and wrong, presence and absence, instantaneity and eternity. No-thing-ness does not allow itself to be approached and

forcefully caught. To tame it, one must exhibit patience and release all willingness to use force. Ceasing to see the myriad of leaves forming the canopy of the forest, being blind to the wooden pillars supporting it, and ignoring the majestic creature reigning over it, this is when it will naturally approach the one standing on the path. One does not conquer no-thing-ness. One only lets himself be conquered by it. Then, he is not someone who perceives it, but rather becomes no-thing-ness itself, experiencing it rather than knowing about it. His mind pervaded by no-thing-ness, he nonetheless does not reject the world and its things.

Man's true destiny is therefore to be a bridge uniting the world and no-thing-ness, intimately familiar with both but abiding in neither. He conciliates the opposites and mends the wounds of the separation between things. He has his feet rooted deep in the ground, but his eyes are turned toward the heights. His body lives but his heart is dead, one with the earth and the sky around him. He incarnates the everlasting principle, always in motion, and yet utterly empty. He dwells in the world of men and interacts with its inhabitants and its creations, and yet, he is equally a man whose heart belongs to the place where there is not a single thing, and where not a single action is performed. Reconciling world and no-thing-ness, he has nothing else to seek, nothing else to acknowledge.[84]

Case 104 —Longtan's Eternal Resonance —久響龍潭1

Source: The Gateless Barrier Case 28.

【中】

lóng tán yīn dé shān qǐng yì dǐ yè tán yún yè shēn
龍潭 因 德山 請益[2] 抵[3] 夜， 潭 云：「夜深，
zǐ hé bú xià qù shān suì zhēn zhòng jiē lián ér chū jiàn wài miàn
子何不下去。」 山 遂珍重[4] 揭簾[5] 而出， 見外面
hēi què huí yún wài miàn hēi tán nǎi diǎn zhǐ zhú dù yǔ shān
黑， 却回云：「外面黑。」 潭 乃點紙燭[6] 度與， 山
nǐ jiē tán biàn chuī miè shān yú cǐ hū rán yǒu xǐng biàn zuò lǐ
擬接， 潭 便吹滅， 山 於此忽然有省， 便作禮，
tán yún zǐ jiàn gè shén me dào lǐ shān yún mǒu jiǎ cóng jīn
潭 云：「子見箇甚麼道理。」 山 云：「某甲從今

[84]See: 神保如天.《從容録通解》。東京：無我山房, 1915. Page 481 (Case 75); And also: Roloff, Dietrich. *Cong-Rong-Lu –Aufzeichnungen aus der Klause der Gelassenheit: Die 100 Kôan des Shôyôroku.* Windpferd Verlagsgesellschaft mbH, 2008. Page 390: "wo Nirväna ist, da ist auch Samsära, also unauförliche Veränderung. Nun lässt sich die Sache aber auch umdrehen: Wo Samsära ist, da ist auch Nirväna, die Große Leere, die keine Veränderung kennt."

rì qù bù yí tiān xià lǎo hé shàng shé tóu yě zhì míng rì lóng tán shēng
日去，不疑天下老和尚舌頭也。」至明日 龍潭 陞
táng yún kě zhōng yǒu gè hàn yá rú jiàn shù kǒu sì xuè pén
堂云：「可中[7] 有箇漢，牙如劍[8] 樹，口似血盆，[9]
yí bàng dǎ bù huí tóu tā shí yì rì xiàng gū fēng dǐng shàng lì wú dào zài
一棒打不回頭，他時異日，向孤峯頂上立吾道在。」
shān suì qū shū chāo yú fǎ táng qián jiāng yí jù huǒ tí qí yún qióng
山 遂取疏抄，[10] 於法堂前將一炬火，提起云：「窮
zhū xuán biàn ruò yì háo zhì yú tài xū jié shì shū jī sì
諸玄辨，[11] 若[12] 一毫致於太虛；竭[13] 世樞機，似
yì dī tóu yú jù hè jiāng shū chāo biàn shāo yú shì lǐ cí
一滴投於巨壑。」[14] 將疏抄便燒，於是禮辭。

[1] 【久響龍潭】 [jiǔ xiǎng lóng tán]: The title of this case is rather unusual, in the sense that the link between the title and the subject of the case is far less obvious than in other cases. It literally means "Longtan's eternal resonance." It may perhaps designate the fame of Longtan, which echoes through the ages.

[2] 【請益】 S:【请益】 [qǐng yì]: "to ask [a teacher] to repeat or explain something one more time."

[3] 【抵】 [dǐ]: "to arrive at."

[4] 【珍重】 [zhēn zhòng]: "to pay one's respects" / "to respectfully give thanks."

[5] 【揭簾】 [jiē lián]: "to push a hanging screen"; 揭 [jiē]: "to expose" / "to unmask."

[6] 【紙燭】【纸烛】 [zhǐ zhú]: "a paper candle." A type of candle made of twisted paper dipped in oil.

[7] 【可中】 [kě zhōng]: "it just so happens that" (modern Chinese: 正好).

[8] 【劍樹】【剑树】 [jiàn shù]: "the sword tree." A tree of swords seen in hell, as described in the chapter entitled "hell" of the sutra named "Dirgha Agama" (長阿含經・地獄品).

[9] 【血盆】 [xuè pén]: "a blood bowl." Originally, this word designated a vessel made to receive the blood of sacrificial offerings, but later also designated the bloody, gaping mouth of a beast. This is the case here. (For another example of such use, see:「有個山羊在那裏吃草，卻被大蟲看見，撲了過去…抱住山羊，張開血盆大口，羊頭吃在腹內。」From: 《鏡花緣》。CTEXT, chapter 49.)

[10] 【疏抄】 [shū chāo]: "commentaries."

[11] 【窮諸玄辨】 [qióng zhū xuán biàn]: "to exhaust oneself discerning the mysteries"; 窮 (S: 穷) [qióng]: "poor" / "destitute" / "to use up" / "to exhaust"; 辨 [biàn]: "to distinguish."

[12] 【若】 [ruò]: "to seem" / "like" / "as."

[13] 【竭世樞機】 [jié shì shū jī]: "to exhaust [the knowledge] of the important men of the world"; 竭 [jié]: "to exhaust"; 樞機 (S: 枢机) [shūjī]: "a metaphor for 'the key' to something" / "a high-ranking official."

[14] 【壑】 [hè]: "a ravine."

【日】

こ りゅうたん ちな とくさんしんえき よる いた たん
擧す。龍潭、因みに德山請益して夜に抵る。潭

云く、「夜深けぬ、子何ぞ下り去らざる。」山遂に珍重して簾を掲げて出ず。外面の黒きを見て、却回して云く、「外面黒し。」潭乃ち紙燭を點じて度與す。山接せんと擬す。潭便ち吹滅す。山此に於て忽然として省あり。便ち作禮す。潭云く、「子箇の甚麼の道理をか見る。」山云く、「某甲、今日より去って天下の老和尚の舌頭を疑わず。」明日に至って龍潭陞堂して云く、「可の中箇の漢有り、牙は劒樹の如く、口は血盆に似て、一棒に打てども頭を回らさざれば、他時異日、孤峰頂上に向って吾が道を立する在ん。」山遂に疎抄を取って、法堂前に於て一炬火を將って提起して云く、「諸の玄辨を窮むるも、一毫を太虛に致くが若く、世の樞機を竭すも、一滴を巨壑に投ずるに似たり。」疎抄を將って便ち焼き、是に於て禮辞す。

【E】

As Deshan had asked Longtan for more explanation [about a previously discussed matter],[1] the night came and Longtan said, “We are deep into the night. Why don’t you go down [to your quarters]?” Deshan then took his leave, pushed the hanging screen, and went out. Seeing the darkness outside, he went back and said, “It is [really] dark outside!” Longtan then lit a candle and offered it to him. As Deshan was about to take it, Longtan blew it out. At that moment, Deshan suddenly gained some insight and then bowed deeply. Longtan asked: “What insight has the disciple gained?”

Deshan said, "From this day on, this one will not doubt [what is uttered by] the tongue of the Master under the heavens." The next day, as he ascended the rostrum, Longtan said, "It just so happens that there is a man. His teeth are like the sword tree [seen in hell], his mouth is a blood bowl, [filled with blood, like the mouth of a ferocious beast]. If one strikes with a club, he doesn't even turn his head. At some point in the future, he will climb to the highest deserted peak and establish my way there." After this, Deshan took all his commentaries, made a bonfire in front of the lecture hall, and said, "[Even if] one exhausts himself to discern the mysteries, it is like the finest strand of hair in the great heavenly void; One may strive to exhaust [the knowledge of] the most important men of the world, but it is like one drop of water thrown into the ocean." He then burned his commentaries and took his leave.

[1] See Case 71 (The Gateless Barrier Case 31).

When words are exhausted, the flesh numbed by the strenuous works of the day, comes the time to face the darkness of the night. The sun has veiled its face under the farthest mountains, and the wild creatures have returned to their cozy lair. These long hours when the world is engulfed in shadows are the best time to face oneself, contemplating one's true face. Flooded with light during the day, the eyes are observing countless things found in man's world, relentlessly solicited by the uninterrupted ballet unfolding in front of them, having no time for introspection. Only illuminated by the moonlight and the faint glow of the silvery wheel turning over the earth, the arms of our galaxy, the night offers rest to the eyes. The footpaths are plunged in darkness, while the chambers of the dwellers of the earth are lit with candles and fires, like a desperate attempt at escaping the reign of the shadows, the obscurity of these hours. Man fears the dark, as it renders him powerless to notice the presence of danger, but perhaps also because he is ill-prepared to face the emptiness it represents. He thinks of himself as a creature of the world, safe within its sturdy walls made of immaterial things and earthly objects, and thus even when the bright sun itself has retreated to leave the earth to the dark, man clings on to his things, using the glow of a candle to keep them close, visible, and to occupy his mind, as if these things were old friends.

Someone of experience nonetheless knows that this is a vain escape,

a childish refusal to face one's true face, and the essence of being. He therefore takes the candle away from the child and leads him to the threshold, where the light of the candle draws a line between the inside and the outside, the room where its light is diffused by the walls, illuminating it to the eyes of man, and the earth and the sky, too vast for its feeble radiance, too weak to be of any use as it cannot light much farther than the feet of the one holding it. Only the flame is visible outside, and its brilliance only plunges the earth and the sky into deeper darkness, eclipsing the gentle twinkling of the distant stars and the soft gleam of the moon. The child then says: "I cannot see anything out there!" and then, suddenly, the man of experience blows the candle out, with these words: "Now, do you see?"[85]

When nothing is seen, when all things have been veiled in obscurity, concealed under a thick blanket of shadows, man is then compelled to face the bare truth of his existence. He stands in front of an infinite mirror and finally sees what is to be found at the root of all things. The light actually conceals their nature, showing their appearance but obscuring the essence. The world still lies out there, unchanged, only seen differently, experienced in its primordial truth rather than merely seen. The words are exhausted; the light has died out, but this is when the heavens appear, when they shine in all their glory, in all their purity, as an instance of perfection, a blank page extended until the confines of the world, a black pit into which all the dust covering men may be thrown and vanish, leaving only contentment and peace, a mind without thought, a heart without worry, completely empty, like a vessel ready to receive a sacred offering.

The child then becomes a man as he discovers his true face in the darkness of the night. His teeth are sharp daggers, and his mouth is filled with the blood of all those whom he brings to death, to the earth and the skies, away from the life of the dwellers of the world, robbing them of their illusions, crushing their possessions, cutting through their flesh until there is no-thing left in them, no-thing left of them. The servants of the world attempt to strike him with clubs, but he does not even notice their blows, as his heart remains in the dark, where there are no things, not even pain or injury. Freed from the desire to see, embracing the dark as well as the bright, seeing the same in them, he spends his existence in the great desert, not even noticing the difference between day and night, light and darkness. He possesses no thing, not even no-thing-ness itself, and thus the remnants of his days of investigation and building up of the world are left behind, slowly crumbling, reclaimed by the earth as the heavenly wheels continue their revolutions. The towers of characters are left in ruins, eroded by the winds, and the seas of ink are evaporated by

[85]See: Yamada, Kou'un, *Mumonkan (Gateless Gate)* [Unpublished manuscript]: "When Longtan blew out the candle, he was actually blowing out the darkness!"

the heat of the summer sun. The hermit then forgets his own age and even forgets whether he lives or is dead.

Case 105 —Cuiyan's Eyebrows —翠岩眉毛

Source: The Blue Cliff Record Case 8.

This case is identical to the Book of Serenity, case 71.

【中】

jǔ cuì yán xià mò shì zhòng yún yí xià yī lái wéi xiōng dì shuō
舉。翠嵒 夏末示眾云：「一夏以來，為兄弟說
huà kàn cuì yán méi máo zài ma bǎo fú yún zuò zéi rén xīn
話，看翠嵒 眉毛在麼。」保福 云：「作賊人心
xū cháng qìng yún shēng yě yún mén yún guān
虛。」[1] 長慶 云：「生也」雲門 云：「關。」[2]

[1] 【心虛】 [xīn xū]: Literally "one's heart is empty," meaning "to have a guilty conscience."

[2] 【關】 S:【关】 [guān]: This word literally means "to close," but here, it is used idiomatically, meaning "to watch out."

【日】

こ すいがん げ まつ しゅ しめ いわ いち げ い
舉す。翠巖、夏末に衆に示して云く、「一夏以
らい きょうだい た はな み すいがん まゆげ あ
來、兄弟の爲めに說話す。看よ、翠巖が眉毛在り
ほ ふくいわ ぞく な ひと しんきょ ちょうけい
や。」保福云く、「賊と作す人は心虛なり。」長慶
いわ しょう うんもんいわ かん
云く、「生ぜり。」雲門云く、「關。」

【E】

At the end of summer, Cuiyan instructed the assembly, saying: "Since the beginning of the summer, I've preached to the brothers. Now look! Are Cuiyan's eyebrows still there?"[1] Baofu said, "The robber feels guilty!"[2] Changching said, "They have grown!" Yunmen said, "Watch out!"[3]

[1] "Are Cuiyan's eyebrows still there": The loss of eyebrows was something associated with thieves and other criminals.

[2] "Watch out": See note 2 of the Chinese text.

The summer is the bright season, when the fiery orb enthroned in the sky lingers for long hours over the horizon, slowly passing through the firmament and showering the earth and the seas with its fire and its heat. The pleasant weather invites men to roam through the land and is propitious to fortuitous encounters. Assembled together with other men walking upon the same path, they support each other, with those more advanced in years or endowed with deeper insights guiding their friends and fellows. Instructing the young, day after day, with fluency and patience, the elder is aware that the tools of the world he employs, his words, can only point out the way for them to go, but cannot bring them to the realization of the nature of the way itself. Furthermore, he begins to worry that perhaps his use of words may have been excessive, leading his followers to stray further away. He thus devises a test, asking a seemingly innocent question, the answer to which will reveal where each one of them now stands: "Since the beginning of the summer, I've preached to the brothers, robbing them blind of all that they had. Now look at yourselves! Is there anything left?!"

The elder is guiding his followers to the place where not a single thing can be brought in, the place where not even one person can be found, and yet, which is also what represents the essence of all that is. It cannot be discovered through explanations and lengthy expositions. It cannot be drawn or pointed out on any map. The way to this place is, all the same, found everywhere, waiting to be unveiled at each instant. It simply demands that one release all the things to which he holds on, including his own self, and the very idea of this place.

One man answers the question of the elder, with these words: "The robber feels guilty!" He has done his best to take away all their things, and yet he still finds himself with empty pockets and an empty heart, entirely devoid of *things*. Soiling his hands with his deeds and dirtying the air of the heavens with his breath laden with vacuous words and concepts, he feels guilty for not having found a better way to lead them where they are meant to be. A man embodying the way of the sky should not even need one word to enlighten the entire world. His path continues.[86]

A second man then offers his answer: "The elder has not robbed us. On the contrary, he has brought us the most precious gift!" He has offered them the gift of no-thing-ness, a thing that fills up the entire

[86]See: 神保如天.《従容録通解》。東京：無我山房, 1915. Page 461 (Case 71): "It is said that in 49 years Shakyamuni didn't teach one word. The eyebrows cover his whole face! But the three men are skilled, they 'saw through' the eyebrows!" Translated by the author.

universe, leaving no other thing remaining besides it.[87] Only one thing stands in front of this man's eyes, and yet this is one too much!

Hearing the previous answer, a third man interjects with the words: "Watch out!" When you begin to count things, you show that you are still a slave to them. Long or short, present or absent, numerous or few, these are ideas of the world, having no existence upon the earth and in the skies. This one has seen the trap laid by the elder, but he does not count how many have fallen in it. When no-thing-ness itself is still grasped as a thing, a piece of the world manipulated by the mind, freedom cannot be experienced, and the place where his true face can be seen remains out of his reach.

A trap may, even so, catch more than prey. The one laying it may indeed also find himself caught by it. If the followers count the things that they have left, they are trapped by the idea of calculating things. Furthermore, if they have anything to count, it means that the elder failed in his task of robbing them of all things, and that their summer retreat has been fruitless. To see it in such a manner would, however, also be falling into the same trap, and we should equally watch out! Only when the mouth is shut, and the mind refrains from raising a single thought, will the contradictions be resolved, with him unafraid of letting torrents of words pass through his throat and see geysers of thought arise and vanish within his consciousness. Then will speech be one with silence, and thoughts will dance with no-thing-ness. The path will end at its beginning, completing the circle, with nothing lost, nothing gained, but everything in place, in the place where there is no thing.

Case 106 —The Discussion Has Fallen into the Grass —落草之談

Source: The Blue Cliff Record Case 34.

【中】

jǔ yǎng shān wèn sēng jìn lí shén chù sēng yún lú shān
舉。仰山 問僧：「近離甚處。」僧云：「廬山。」
shān yún céng yóu wǔ lǎo fēng ma sēng yún bù céng dào
1 山 云：「曾遊五老峯[2] 麼。」僧云：「不曾到。」

[87]See: Yamada, Kou'un, *Hekiganroku (Blue Cliff Record)* [Unpublished manuscript]: "The eyebrows filling up the entire universe! They too are an embodiment of the essential nature." Original Japanese:「何処を見て言っているのか、この眉毛宇宙一杯の眉毛です、れもエッセンシャル・ネーチャーを見ながら生えとる生えとる心配するなと。」From: 山田耕雲。《碧岩集提唱山田耕雲》。[Unpublished manuscript].

shān yún shé lí bù céng yóu shān yún mén yún cī yǔ jiē wéi
山云：「闍黎不曾遊山。」雲門云：「此語皆為
cí bēi zhī gù yǒu luò cǎo zhī tán
慈悲之故，有落草之談。」

[1] 【廬山】 S:【庐山】 [lú shān]: a mountain in the modern province of Jiangxi (江西), famous for its beauty and its numerous monasteries.

[2] 【五老峰】 [wǔ lǎo fēng]: "the Five Elders Peaks." The five peaks are shaped like five old men standing side by side, hence the name. The famous poet Lǐ Bái (李白) studied at the "White Deer Grotto Academy" (白鹿洞書院), which was located at the foot of the five peaks. He wrote about them in a poem entitled: "Climbing the Five Old Peaks of Mount Lushan" (登廬山五老峰).

【日】

こ きょうざん そう と ちか いずこ はな
擧す。仰山、僧に問う、「近ごろ甚處を離れし
そういわ ろざん さんいわ かつ ごろうみね あそ
や。」僧云く、「廬山。」山云く、「曾て五老峰に遊ぶ
そういわ かつ いた ざんいわ そなた
や。」僧云く、「曾て到らず。」山云く、「闍黎は、
かつ ゆさん うんもんいわ こ ご み じひ
曾て遊山せず。」雲門云く、「此の語、皆な慈悲の
ため ゆえ らくそう たん
爲の故に、落草の談あり。」

【E】

Yangshan asked a monk: "Where have you come from?" The monk said, "Mount Lu."[1] Yangshan said, "Have you already traveled to the Five Elders Peaks?"[2] The monk said, "I have never traveled there." Yangshan said, "The young teacher never traveled to the mountains at all." Yunmen said, "Because of too much compassion, this discussion has fallen into the grass."[3]

[1] "Mount Lu": See note 1 of the Chinese text.

[2] "The Five Elders Peaks": See note 2 of the Chinese text.

[3] "The grass": Grass is associated with the illusions of the world, those who are deluded, or beginners in the practice of Zen.

What may appear like the most mundane question may reveal itself to be a cornucopia, out of which an entire mountain of things

may be drawn, rendering any other question superfluous and redundant. When the hermit encounters someone on the narrow mountain path, he naturally asks: "Where do you come from?" The answer offered by the traveler will reveal where he now stands, whether he is a tree supporting the heavens or a mere blade of grass balanced by the summer zephyr. His mouth opens up, and it lets out the words: "From the mountain over there." The horizon of the blade of grass is as narrow as the path. It only sees what is in its immediate vicinity, the grassland. It has no idea of where it stands, unlike the majestic pine tree growing upon the mountaintop that oversees the plains and sees where heaven and earth are joined. Where do we come from? We are the last links of an incredibly long chain of living things. We arose from the bosom of our mother, who herself arose from hers. We come from a line of tree-dwelling apes, and before that were rodents burrowing in the belly of the earth. Before our ancestors stepped foot upon the dry land, we were fish swimming the muddy shallows, and even before that, sea sponges feeding from the scraps of the ocean. Minuscule cells floating in the waters bathed in the radiance of the sun are our forefathers, and theirs were simple aggregates of the most rudimentary elements, almost magically bewitched, reproducing themselves with minute but crucial variations. Before life itself, our substance was the dust of the primordial conflagration, scattered throughout the skies as they were unfolded. Where were we before that? Where are we now, beyond the façade offered by our world? Some of us are pure dwellers of this world, while others have before their eyes the place that was before the first thing emerged, before the emergence of this world, our true home.

The pilgrim is lost in the mountains, not knowing where he comes from and where he is destined to go. He roams the earth in search of enlightenment, failing to realize that he is a prisoner of his world, and that wisdom is to be found in liberation from it, rather than upon well-trodden paths on the earth. Peregrinations are fruitless if they do not lead to a clash of worlds, a collision between master and disciple, a contact between the trees of the great forest and the short blades of grass of the plains. But the discovery of the lost creature upon the mountain path gives the hermit an occasion to demonstrate his benevolence, which is the wisdom of the man of the way, of one who sees beyond the appearance of all things. Coming down from the peak to greet him, the elder stoops to his height: "Have you visited the masters inhabiting this mountain from where you come?" He declares that he has not, and is thus given a gentle clarification concerning where he stands: "Then, you have never traveled the mountains at all!" He has aimlessly roamed the earth but remained comfortably seated in his world, failing to encounter other views of it, and thus has not received any insight from his peregrination. The mountain to conquer is not found upon the earth. The highest peak that he must reach is within his own heart.

There will he be able to contemplate the nature of his world, seeing where he stands and contemplating the immensity of the heavens above, seeing that there is not a single thing outside of his world. He will then forget the way home, as he will realize that there is nowhere to call home anymore.[88] His home is the foundation of all things, and it is no-thing-ness itself, what remains when all things have disappeared, what was there before the first thing emerged. This is when the peaks will be leveled, and the trees won't be distinguished from the blades of grass. Having become a man of the heights, he will himself accompany others during their ascent, overwhelmed by compassion, not distinguishing the identity of the recipients of his benevolence, as he is now blind to the lines separating the self from the other.

Case 107 —Three Three Before, Three Three Behind —前三三后三三

Source: The Blue Cliff Record Case 35.

【中】

jǔ wén shū wèn wú zhuó jìn lí shén me chù wú zhuó
舉。文殊[1] 問無著：「近離什麼處。」無著
yún nán fāng shū yún nán fāng fó fǎ rú hé zhù chí zhuó
云：「南方。」殊 云：「南方佛法，如何住持。」著
yún mò fǎ bǐ qiū shǎo fèng jiè lǜ shū yún duō shǎo zhòng
云：「末法比丘，[2] 少奉[3] 戒律。」殊 云：「多少眾。」
zhuó yún huò sān bǎi huò wǔ bǎi wú zhuó wèn wén shū cǐ jiān
著 云：「或三百或五百。」無著 問文殊：「此間
rú hé zhù chí shū yún fán shèng tóng jū lóng shé hùn zá zhuó
如何住持。」殊 云：「凡聖同居，龍蛇混雜。」著
yún duō shǎo zhòng shū yún qián sān sān hòu sān sān
云：「多少眾。」殊 云：「前三三，後三三。」[4]

[1] 【文殊】 [wén shū]: Manjushri (मञ्जुश्री [Mañjuśrī] in Sanskrit, meaning: "the Beautiful One with Glory") is the Bodhisattva of keen awareness, the embodiment of Prajñā Wisdom. In the Chinese tradition, his "seat" (bodhimaṇḍa in Sanskrit / 道場 [dào cháng] in Chinese) is said to be Mount Wutai (五台山), in the province of Shanxi (山西).

[2] 【末法比丘】 [mò fǎ bǐ qiū]: "monks who belong to an age of decline of Buddhism."

[3] 【奉】[fèng]: "to follow [religious precepts]" / "to revere" / "to believe in (a religion)"

[4] 【前三三，後三三】 [qián sān sān, hòu sān sān]: A deliberately grammatically incorrect sentence, literally meaning: "three three before, three three after" or "three three in front, three three behind," whose enigmatic nature represents the heart of this case.

[88] See: Villalba, Dokusho. *Hekiganroku. Crónicas del Acantilado Azul.* Miraguano Ediciones. 1994. Page 149: "No soy de aquí ni soy de allá, ni tengo edad, ni porvenir ... Abandona el apego a tu lugar de nacimiento y vuela alto como Kanzan hasta que se te olvide por completo el camino de regreso."

【日】

舉す。文殊、無著に問う、「近ごろ什麼處を離れしや。」無著云く、「南方。」殊云く、「南方の仏法、如何にか住持する。」著云く、「末法の比丘、戒律を奉ずるもの少なり。」殊云く、「多少の衆ぞ。」著云く、「或は三百、或は五百。」無著、文殊に問う、「此間にては如何にか住持する。」殊云く、「凡聖同居、龍蛇混雑す。」著云く、「多少の衆ぞ。」殊云く、「前三三、後三三。」

【E】

Manjushri asked Wuzhuo: “Where have you come from?” Wuzhuo answered: “From the south.” Manjushri said, “How is Buddhism in the south maintained?” Wuzhuo said, “The monks belong to an age of decline of Buddhism. They only follow the precepts a little.” Manjushri said, “How many people are there in the congregation?” Wuzhuo said, “Maybe three hundred [here], maybe five hundred [there].” Wuzhuo asked Manjushri: “How is it maintained here?” Manjushri said, “The holy and the commoner live together; dragons and snakes mingle with each other.” Wuzhuo said, “How many are there in the congregation?” Manjushri said, “Three three before, three three behind.” [1]

[1] “Manjushri”: See note 1 of the Chinese text.

[2] “Three three before, three three behind”: See note 4 of the Chinese text.

One may spend an entire lifetime on the path and still fail to know where it leads, if one stands still rather than explore and advance, following those who have reached its destination. The way of the sky pervades the world of man. It is told about in voluminous manuscripts

and is the subject of lengthy discussions. The fundamental law is reflected upon and more or less diligently followed in the land. But all this presence of the way within language and the broader world of man is futile if it does not lead its inhabitants to become aware of what lies beyond it, and upon what foundation it rests. A step in this direction is taken when one is shown the arbitrariness of words, the weakness of the basis of the world, and that one is not bound to obey its rules.

An elder coming from a remote past and a remote land asks someone standing still on the path: "Where have you come from?" If he had seen his own face, the man standing still would not have known how to answer. He has never come from anywhere and does not go anywhere. There is only here and now, extended to the beginning and the end of time and space. There is no origin or destination, only the way itself. There is no one who could come and go, and nowhere where he would be. A sound reverberates through the air in the form of a question, but it is only the sky whispering to itself, with an echo heard as this sound bounces through a mind. The sound propagated through the sky is nonetheless heard as speech within the walls of the world.

The man in need of guidance thus answers the elder: "From the south." Every place on earth may be found in the south of where one stands. Walking upon the watery and rocky orb that offers shelter to the tree of life, one is bound to reach any part of it if he is patient enough and continues his peregrination. A wonderful answer, a jewel, wonderfully ambiguous, shallow and deep, clever and stupid, perfectly embodying the unicity of the world with no-thing-ness. Had he stopped there, one might have thought that this man was not lost at all, but rather already went there and was on his way back to guide others.

The foreign elder then once again asks him: "How is the teaching of the fundamental law maintained in the south?" He then promptly answers: "The teaching's presence is in decline, and men only follow the precepts a little." The fundamental law does not need to be taught. It only needs to be perceived. It pervades all that is, no matter whether men are there to notice it. To be focused on prosperity and decline, and to quantify respect for nature itself is to be blind to the essence of the law, to the basis of the world and the skies. To become intimate with this essence is to discover the place where nothing can be quantified, where there is no rise or fall, no respect or violation. The elder has the eye, and he intends to unveil the chains of this prisoner standing before him, who is blind to their presence. He thus decides to lead him further on his own path of computation and measure, to point out its absurdity, its insignificance in front of the majesty of the heavens and of the serenity of no-thing-ness itself: "How many people are there?" A vulgar question, to invite the one to whom it is addressed to realize the vacuity of his previous answers. Numbers are then thrown into the air:

"Three hundred there, five hundred there." The end has been reached, absolute vacuity, but the realization has yet to come. This is when the novice is led to turn back, returning the questions to the elder, who is ready to show him the error of his ways.

The elder is thus questioned: "How is it maintained there?" and he rapidly answers, without an instant of reflection: "There, the holy lives together with the commoner; dragons and snakes mingle with each other." He abides neither in the world nor in no-thing-ness, but rather lives between them both, joining them together, without letting the subtle nuance between them completely fade away. He plays with both, at times seeing them as one, at times distinguishing the contrast they offer, never being attached to either, not even being attached to his non-attachment itself. Snakes are dragons, and dragons are snakes, depending on one's way of looking at them. Another question is given to him: "How many are there in the congregation?" and then, his world is shattered with a simple answer: "Three three before, three three behind." The elder breaks the rules of language and thereby points out the nature of this tool of the world that controls the mind of his interlocutor. He refuses to calculate, to offer him a number that would only render the one hearing it more attached to useless quantification, a vain cutting out of the oneness of nature. The answer is meaningless, as those given to him before, but this one is far from useless, as here its meaninglessness is used as a tool to point out the place occupied by language in his world, and the limits of this tool. Here, it is not speech, but rather only a sound thrown into the air, which should be heard as such, a wave propagated throughout the heavens, representing the unity of the world and the skies, word and sound, mind and no-thing-ness. Gazing upon the stars, the gentle glow of our galaxy enfolding the earth from north to south, there may we perceive the meaninglessness of numbers, the vacuity of quantification, seeing the whole of being, realizing that it can neither be put into words nor numbers, but only perceived as a totality, before letting it go, seeing beyond the light of the stars, beyond the darkness of space, the root of being itself.[89]

Case 108 —The Activity of the Iron Ox — 鐵牛之機

Source: The Blue Cliff Record Case 38.

This case is identical to the Book of Serenity, case 29.

[89] About the number, Hakuin said, "If you want to know this, refer to the number of last night's stars, and the number of this morning's raindrops." From: Cleary, Thomas. *Secrets of the Blue Cliff Record: Zen Comments by Hakuin and Tenkei.* Shambhala Publications, 2002. n.p. (The original Japanese could not be located).

【中】

jǔ fēng xué zài yīng zhōu yá nèi shàng táng yún zǔ shī xīn yìn
舉。風穴在郢州衙内，[1] 上堂云：「祖師心印，[2]
zhuàng sì tiě niú zhī jī qù jí yìn zhù zhù jí yìn pò
狀似鐵牛[3]之機。[4] 去即印住，住即印破。
zhī rú bú qù bú zhù yìn jí shì bú yìn jí shì shí yǒu lú bēi
只如[5]不去不住，印即是，不印即是。」時有盧陂
zhǎng lǎo chū wèn mǒu jiǎ yǒu tiě niú zhī jī qīng shī bù dā yìn
長老，出問：「某甲有鐵牛之機，請師不搭[6]印。」
xué yún guàn diào jīng ní chéng jù jìn què jiē wā bù zhǎn
穴云：「慣釣鯨鯢[7]澄[8]巨浸，[9]却嗟[10]蛙步輾
ní shā bēi zhù sī xué hè yún zhǎng lǎo hé bú jìn yǔ
泥沙。」陂佇思，穴喝云：「長老何不進語。」
bēi nǐ yì xué dǎ yì fú zi xué yún huán jì dé huò tóu ma
陂擬議。穴打一拂子，穴云：「還記得話頭麼。
shì jù kàn bēi nǐ kāi kǒu xué yòu dǎ yì fú zi mù zhǔ
試舉看。」陂擬開口，穴又打一拂子。牧主[11]
yún fó fǎ yǔ wáng fǎ yì bān xué yún jiàn gè shén me dào lǐ
云：「佛法與王法一般。」穴云：「見箇什麼道理。」
mù zhǔ yún dāng duàn bú duàn fǎn zhāo qí luàn xué biàn xiè zuò
牧主云：「當斷不斷，返招其亂。」穴便下座。

[1] 【衙内】 [yá nèi]: “child of an official” / “palace bodyguard.”

[2] 【心印】 [xīn yìn]: “the mind-seal.” The symbolic seal certifying of the non-verbal transmission of the teaching.

[3] 【鐵牛】 S:【铁牛】 [tiě niú]: “the iron ox.” A massive ox statue made of iron and placed at the bottom of the Yellow River, under a bridge. It stood against the stream and was said to protect the area from flooding. It may also have been used as an anchor for a floating bridge.

[4] 【機】 S:【机】 [jī]: “activity” / “function.” This word is rather complex to define, as it possesses a variety of different meanings, including that of “opportunity.” For other uses of this word, see case 88, case 112, and case 168.

[5] 【只如】 [zhǐ rú]: “it is like,” equivalent to the modern Chinese: 就像 .

[6] 【搭】 [dā] “to apply [the seal].”

[7] 【鯨鯢】 S:【鲸鲵】 [jīng ní]: “a whale.”

[8] 【澄】 S:【澄】 [chéng]: “to clear.”

[9] 【巨浸】 [jù jìn]: “a great expanse of water” / “a great river.”

[10] 【嗟】 [jiē]: “alas!” Also pronounced [juē].

[11] 【牧主】 [mù zhǔ]: “a government official” / “a magistrate.”

【日】

こ ふけつ えいしゅう が だい あ じょうどう
舉す。風穴、郢州の衙内に在って上堂して

云く、「祖師の心印、鐵牛の機に状似たり。去れば即ち印は住し、住すれば即ち印は破す。只だ去らず住せざるが如きは、印するが即ち是か、印せざるが即ち是か。」時に盧陂長老なるものあり、出でて問う、「某甲、鐵牛の機あり、請う師、印を搭せざれ。」穴云く、「鯨鯢を釣って巨浸を澄ましむるに慣れて、却って嗟く蛙歩の泥沙に輾ぶことを。」陂、佇思す。穴、喝して云く、「長老、何ぞ進語せざる。」陂、擬義す。穴、打つこと一拂子。穴云く、「還た話頭を記得すや。試みに擧し看よ。」陂、口を開かんと擬す。穴又た打つこと一拂子。牧主云く、「仏法と王法と一般なり。」穴云く、「箇の什麼の道理をか見る。」牧主云く、「當に斷ずべくして斷ぜず、返って其の亂を招く。」穴便ち下座す。

【E】

Fengxue went to the government office of the Ying Province. He entered the hall [and addressing the men gathered there,] said, “The nature of the mind-seal [1] of the patriarch resembles the activity of the iron ox.[2] When it goes away, the [imprint of the] seal remains; when it remains there, the [imprint of the] seal is ruined. If [the seal] does not go away or remain, should one apply the seal or not?” At that moment, Elder Lubei came forward and said, “This one has the activity of the iron ox. But please, Master, do not apply the seal [on me].” Fengxue said, “I am used to clearing up the great ocean by fishing whales. But, alas, now I am dealing

with a frog wriggling about in the mud." Lubei stood there, thinking. Fengxue shouted "Haa!" and said, "Why doesn't the Elder say something more?" Lubei was puzzled. Fengxue hit him with his whisk and said, "Do you remember the subject of the discussion? Try to say something." Lubei was about to say something, but Fengxue hit him once more with his whisk. The Magistrate said, "Buddha's law and the King's law are of the same nature." Fengxue said, "What principle do you see in them?" The Magistrate said, "If you do not cut short when you should, you are inviting disorder." Fengxue then descended from the rostrum.

[1] "The heart-seal": See note 2 of the Chinese text.

[2] "The iron ox": See note 3 of the Chinese text.

What goes beyond words and characters cannot be taught with them. Awareness and familiarity with the fundamental law of nature, the essential nature of all that is, is not something that can be given from mouth to ear. To inherit it, one must first let the great flow carried upon the way pervade his heart, softening it as the dry earth turned into malleable mud by a downpour. When earth is mingled with water, when an experience of the essence of nature has penetrated man's heart, he is ready to receive the imprint of the great seal, letting himself be transformed by the teacher, who appears like a block of jade, hard and pure, carved by the flow itself.

When the seal is applied, it remains invisible, as if inexistent, as long as it remains in place. When it is taken away, the imprint appears, and it is then exposed to the element. The moisture is slowly taken away by the sun and the winds, and the mud solidifies into dry earth, compacted into rock and polished, until one day, when it now appears to be made of jade, a complementary image of the original seal, ready to leave its mark on a piece of clay.

The imprint of the seal on one's mind renders what it touches heavier than iron. Thanks to its work, the heart of the heir is deeply anchored into the earth, unwavering and secure, tied to the essence of all things themselves. This heart is like a statue standing in the depths, unaffected by the raging currents passing it by from all sides. His consciousness is a bridge loosely bound to this anchor in the water. It embraces the flow, harmoniously floating with it, accompanying its rises and falls, never washed away, even by the most violent flood, always

remaining one with it, at its surface, thanks to the inconspicuous work of the iron statue standing in the silt. The teaching allows one to be in harmony with the way of the sky, embracing its flow, but it also impedes its natural course. This anchor provides safety, but it also prevents exploration and the discovery of the destination of this flow. To receive a teaching can allow us to stand on the shoulders of our fathers, but there comes a point in life when one must become more than a mere heir, when one must sever the link with his inheritance, cutting off the chain tied to the anchor, agreeing to put an end to the standstill and let himself be carried toward the unknown.

When the master dangles the seal before the eyes of his followers, asking them who is ready to let it be applied upon them, he is nonetheless also like a fisherman with a fourfold hook at the end of a line, ready to catch them, and thereby teach them about the essence of all things. If one desires to receive the seal, one is unworthy of it. If one refuses to receive the seal, one is undeserving of it. Only someone who is blind to its nature may be fit to receive it, someone as soft as water itself, already one with the flow, and as hard as jade, one with the earth upon which the water runs. A seal of water imprinted upon water. A block of jade pressed against another. Nothing is gained, nothing is lost, and yet the essence is thereby manifested. The waters are troubled by the whales swimming in the depths, and the mud cannot be distinguished from the water. The whales cannot be discerned from the frogs, and no one knows not whether the seal is present or not.

When the knavish student is caught, with the hook in his mouth, as he is perplexed by the opposition between the presence or absence of the seal used as bait, the wound renders him speechless, only causing him pain, and he only lets a loud cry resound in the preaching hall, thinking he will thereby scare his captor into letting go of his catch. Seeing the fish wriggle upon the ground, the master then puts an end to its misery, with a swift blow of his whisk. This is the seal that he deserves, imprinted upon his forehead, in the hope that he would realize where he stands. Playing in the mud with frogs, debating the beauty of the sky with an assembly of blind men, there nonetheless comes a point when the master's benevolence is leading others further astray rather than guiding them, and thus one should recognize the time when silence speaks more than words, and when the best lesson is to deprive the students of any instruction.

Case 109 —Zhaoqing Prepares Tea —招慶煎茶

Source: The Blue Cliff Record Case 48.

【中】

jǔ wáng tài fù rù zhāo qìng jiān chá shí lǎng shàng zuò
舉。王 太傅[1] 入 招慶 煎茶。時 朗 上座
yǔ míng zhāo bǎ diào lǎng fān què chá diào tài fù jiàn wèn shàng
與 明招 把銚，[2] 朗翻却茶銚，太傅見，問上
zuò chá lú xiè shì shén me lǎng yún pěng lú shén tài fù
座：「茶爐下是什麼。」朗 云：「捧[3] 爐神。」太傅
yún jì shì pěng lú shén wèi shén me fān què chá diào lǎng yún shì
云：「既是捧爐神，為什麼翻却茶銚。」朗 云：「仕
guān qiān rì shī zài yì zhāo tài fù fú xiù biàn qù míng zhāo
官[4] 千日，失在一朝。」太傅拂袖[5] 便去。明招
yún lǎng shàng zuò chī què zhāo qìng fàn liǎo què qù jiāng wài dǎ yě zhāi
云：「朗 上座喫却招慶飯了，却去江外打野梗。」
lǎng yún hé shàng zuò me shēng zhāo yún fēi rén dé qí biàn
[6] 朗 云：「和尚作麼生。」招 云：「非人得其便。」
xuě dòu yún dāng shí dàn tà dào chá lú
[7] 雪竇 云：「當時但踏倒茶爐。」

[1] 【太傅】 [tài fù]: “a grand tutor” / “a tutor to the imperial family.”

[2] 【銚】 S:【铫】 [diào]: “a kettle.”

[3] 【捧】 [pěng]: “to hold up with both hands.”

[4] 【仕官】 [shì guān]: “[to serve] as a government official.”

[5] 【拂袖】 [fú xiù]: “to give a flick of his sleeves” (expressing anger or contempt).

[6] 【打野梗】 [dǎ yě zhāi]: This expression literally means “to hit a wild stump.” This appears to be an idiomatic expression originating from the Fuzhou region (福州), meaning “to gather people so that they would brawl,” here translated as “to pick a fight.” (See: 《佛光大辭典電子版》。佛光山文教基金會, 2007. Page 1933: 「禪林用語。梗，枯木之根。打野梗，即叩枯木根之意。原作打野堆，意指聚集眾人，成堆打鬨，係福州之諺語。…聯燈會要卷二十一悟明章卍續一三六・三九五上)：「如福州諺曰：『打野堆』者，成堆打鬨也。今明招錄中作打野梗。後來圓悟碧巖集中解云：『野梗，乃山上燒不過底火柴頭。』」).

[7] 【得其便】 [dé qí biàn]: “to get an advantage” / “to get something [out of something else].” (See the expression: 两得其便 “there are advantages to both sides,” or the following example: 「當初韓信懷才未遇，漢皇缺少大將，得其便。」 From: 明馮夢龍.《喻世明言》。CTEXT, chapter 31) .

【日】

こ おうたいふ しょうけい はい ちゃ い とき
舉す。王太傅、招慶に入りて茶を煎ず。時に
ろうじょうざ みょうしょう ため ちょう と ろう さちょう くつがえ
朗上座、明招の與に銚を把る。朗、茶銚を翻却す。
たいふ み じょうざ と さろかこ なん ろう
太傅見て上座に問う、「茶爐下是れ什麼ぞ。」朗
いわ ぼうろじん たいふいわ すで こ ぼうろじん
云く、「棒爐神。」太傅云く、「既に是れ棒爐神、
なにゆえ さちょう くつがえ ろういわ しかん せんにち
爲什麼にか茶銚を翻却す。」朗云く、「仕官千日、

失は一朝に在り。」太傅、袖を拂って便ち去る。明招云く、「朗上座、招慶のを喫却い了るや、却って江外に去きて野梩を打す。」朗云く、「和尚は作麼生。」招云く、「非人、其の便を得たり。」雪竇云く、「當時但だ茶爐を踏倒さん。」

【E】

Grand Tutor Wang visited Zhaoqing Temple and agreed to drink tea. The senior monk Lang took up the kettle to serve Mingzhao, but Lang overturned the kettle [over the tea hearth]. The minister saw this and asked the senior monk: "What is this, under the tea hearth?" Lang said, "Deities holding up the hearth." The minister said, "If they are deities holding up the hearth, why did they overturn the kettle?" Lang said, "A thousand days of service, and all is lost in one morning." The minister gave a flick of his sleeves and went out. Mingzhao said, "Elder Lang has eaten Zhaoqing Temple's food [for a long time], and yet he went beyond the river to pick a fight." Lang said, "What would the Master have said?" Mingzhao said, "The non-human got the advantage." (Xuedou said, "At that moment, I would have kicked over the tea hearth.")

[1] "Gave a flick of his sleeve": See note 5 of the Chinese text.

[2] "To pick a fight": See note 6 of the Chinese text.

The sparrows whistle their tunes of love and joy while soaring through the air, as the warm gusts play with the jade-colored leaves of the oak showered with sunlight, and the heart of men is uplifted by the temporary clemency of the skies. The builders of the world thus invite their neighbors to share with them a cup of the liquid of life, richly flavored with the fruits of the earth. When men congregate, the danger is, despite this fact, never far away. All too easy it is for a hermit to forget himself and abandon his self, rejoicing in perfect unity with

the way of the sky, but as soon as others are present, the self makes a brutal return, ready to push away others to impose its presence, prone to humiliate what it sees as an opponent to exalt what it considers to be its own greatness. Harmony with the way is, even so, demonstrated by the relinquishing of the self, unbound benevolence toward all beings, and an aptitude to lead the blind to see and embrace their own nature.

Men are an aggregate of droplets of water fallen from the heavens, as the liquid of life represents the vast majority of their bodies. These droplets run over the earth after having fallen down from the celestial realm. Some of them spend eons seeping through the ground before reaching the depths of the sea, while others are swiftly hit by the fiery rays of the sun, vaporized, once again becoming one with the air filling the heavens, invisible, dissolved in the whole. Such fire may also be found upon the earth. A good-hearted and skillful teacher is a bright torch in the cold darkness of the night, and by coming into contact with it, the student may see his ego vaporized as a minute droplet of water, becoming the heavens themselves, unseen, unfathomable, and ungraspable, no-thing-ness incarnate. Such an event is for all that not something to be planned or forced. Confidence in the work of the skies, the flow carried upon the way, implies that one should not be caught in the trap of the inquiry into causes and consequences, as these are mere things of the world, creations of the mind, while the truth of the skies is a seamless brocade forming a perfect sphere, without beginning or end, without front or back. But men are easily fooled by themselves, and they feel compelled to search for reasons and causes, tempted to count the passing of time and measure the benevolence of their benefactors, showing their attachment to the vacuity of the world, instead of embracing the true emptiness of the skies, which is their essential nature.

When one has lifted up the veil covering up the true nature of the world and discovered the place where there is not a single thing, nor a single man, one is no longer disturbed by the agitation of this world, by the power plays and the clashes of egos, omnipresent in it. When he is the target of an offense, he remains impassive, as there is nothing to be shaken. He is an empty vessel, a cavity resonating throughout the sky when it is struck. But few will take care of observing this vessel, and they instead look for signs in the heavens, not hesitating to create what they would hope to see. Unable to see the seamlessness of the all-encompassing heavens, they build images representing what they see as the root of the order or disorder established within their world, deities that would be the cause of all the consequences unfolding before their eyes. The one attached to the purity of no-thing-ness itself would be offended by such crude representations, and he may be tempted to kick them down, crushing them with a hammer, but one who sees their nature

knows that all things are empty, without any single thing being less empty than others, and thus he does not even see them as any different from the birds in the air or the clouds veiling the radiance of the sun.

Man's destiny is to discover what is found beyond his humanity, outside of his world, that is, the realm of the non-human. This only occurs when his humanity itself is relinquished. Then can he join the celestial, not becoming a god or a holy man, but simply being what he was before his birth, before the inception of life, before the unfolding of the heavens. He may then observe the curious congregations of men, the poor displays of their ignorance of the way of the sky, with a compassionate eye, seeing in them the slow course of droplets of rain running in the valleys, ready to be turned into vapor and join him back in the sky, even though they are never truly separated from it.

Case 110 —Did You Get the Sword? —還收得劍么

Source: The Blue Cliff Record Case 66.

【中】

jǔ yán tóu wèn sēng shén me chù lái sēng yún xī jīng lái
舉。巖頭 問僧：「什麼處來。」僧云：「西京來。」
tóu yún huáng cháo guò hòu huán shōu dé jiàn ma sēng yún shōu
頭 云：「黃巢[1] 過後，還收得劍麼。」僧云：「收
dé yán tóu yīn jīng jìn qián yún huò sēng yún shī tóu
得。」巖頭 引頸[2] 近前云：「囸。」[3] 僧云：「師頭
luò yě yán tóu hē hē dà xiào sēng hòu dào xuě fēng fēng wèn shén
落也。」巖頭 呵呵大笑。僧後到雪峯，峯問：「什
me chù lái sēng yún yán tóu lái fēng yún yǒu hé yán
麼處來。」僧云：「巖頭 來。」峯 云：「有何言
jù sēng jǔ qián huà xuě fēng dǎ sān shí bàng gǎn chū
句。」僧舉前話，雪峯 打三十棒趕出。

[1] 【黃巢】 [Huáng Cháo]: The leader of a peasant uprising during the Tang dynasty. He is said to have received a sword from the heavens, bearing the following inscription: "the heavens give Huangchao this sword." He was killed four years after (884 A.D.), having conquered the "Western Capital" (西京 [xī jīng], currently 西安 [xī ān]) in 880 A.D.

[2] 【引頸】 S:【引颈】 [yǐn jǐng]: "to crane one's neck" / "with one's neck outstretched [in expectation]."

[3] 【囸】 [huò]: Onomatopoeia expressing the sound of a boat's ropes being pulled, and also used as an interjection expressing disapproval of commiseration, like the English word "tut." The use here nonetheless appears to be purely onomatopoeic.

【日】

舉す。巖頭、僧に問う、「什麼處よりか來たる。」僧云く、「西京より來たる。」頭云く、「黄巣過ぎし後、還た劍を收得せしや。」僧云く、「收得せり。」巖頭、頚を引し近前きて云く、「囚。」僧云く、「師の頭落ちたり。」巖頭、呵呵大笑す。僧、後に雪峰に到る。峰問う、「什麼處よりか來たる。」僧云く、「巖頭より來たる。」峰云く、「何の言句か有りし。」僧、前話を舉す。雪峰、打つこと三十棒して趕い出す。

【E】

Yantou asked a monk: “Where have you come from?” The monk said, “From the Western Capital.” Yantou said, “After Huangchao[1] passed away, did you get his sword?” The monk said, “I got it.” Yantou stuck out his neck as he went in front of the monk and said, “Haa!”[2] The monk said, “The teacher’s head has fallen.” Yantou laughed loudly. The monk later came to Xuefeng. Xuefeng asked: “Where have you come from?” The monk said, “From Yantou.” Xuefeng asked: “What words [did he say]?” The monk told him about the aforementioned conversation. Xuefeng gave him thirty blows with his stick and drove him out.

[1] “Huangchao”: See note 1 of the Chinese text

[2] “Ah!”: See note 3 of the Chinese text.

The wanderer peregrinates in search of illumination, failing to realize that he himself is a source of light traveling through the darkness, observing all that it illuminates, without seeing that he is the illumination that he seeks. Where does this wanderer come from? From the noisy streets of the capital of the world, the place where things are

heaped high enough to touch the sky, and where the bare earth has been entirely paved with the products of their own hands, concealing the rocky face of our planet. The dweller of the great citadel would need an extremely piercing eye to see what lies beyond its walls, or perhaps better stated, what does not lie beyond them, as there is only no-thing there. His heart thirsts for power and glory, for money and fame, ready to revolt against the order of nature itself, considering that his self is the center point of the creation, as it is through it that all his experiences occur.[90] The weapon of the rebel is the sword, which can cut the heavens into pieces of the world, neatly stacked and arrayed according to his whims. What is not two is shattered by the blade, into innumerable pieces, becoming his prized possessions, and the lenses through which he beholds the earth and the skies. This weapon is the one shared by the commoner as well as the king, by the old and the young, the learned and the ignorant. It is the tool that gave rise to the world, used to build it at each instant, but there is another, a rarer instrument, one that is not to be used to cut out the heavens, but rather to wield its power.

The sword that gives death and brings back to life is the one wielded by the one who has explored the territory that lies beyond the frontiers of the world of men, having made the great desert his home for a while, before a homecoming, to kill the deluded prisoners of this world, before offering them a helping hand so that they would rise from the earth, standing up from the grave, to soar into the heavens and see the unicity of the earth, the world, and the skies. The great death that comes with the sword is the one marking the vanishing of the self, turned to ashes and scattered to the winds. The resurrection is the rebirth of the mind, cleared of its illusions, empty of its self, without desire, without will, only an instrument of the way of the sky itself, an empty vessel used by it to quench the thirst of the prisoners.

Asked if he received the sword, the wanderer declares that this gift has indeed been bestowed upon him, without understanding the nature of this weapon of life and death. His host then demands a demonstration of his use of this sword, sticking out his own neck in front of him, with a deafening shout inviting him to strike without delay: "Haa!" He has taken a leap from language to mere noise, without abandoning his willingness to teach the visitor a lesson. Still blind to its meaning, the wanderer tries to drag the host back into the realm of words, with a reply that he undoubtedly thought to be clever and that would be appreciated by his audience: "The teacher's head has already fallen." Hearing this poor demonstration of his swordsmanship, the teacher only replies with a loud laugh, showing him once again that words are not necessary to

[90] See: Villalba, Dokusho. *Hekiganroku. Crónicas del Acantilado Azul.* Miraguano Ediciones. 1994. Page 75: "La experiencia de la Iluminación implica el abandono del ego rebelde. El ego es siempre rebelde. Se niega a admitir la existencia de un poder superior a él."

convey meaning. But one who does not know where he comes from would, unsurprisingly, not understand such a silent teaching, and thus would depart without any insight. Recounting this encounter to other men of experience, he would be greeted with a stick, more fitting to such a student, incapable of being taught in silence, using subtlety and inconspicuous signs. Like a beast, he is taught with a club, a tool bringing the one lost in the realm of thoughts swiftly back to the earth, the domain of the senses, with his pain telling him of his foolishness. Blows of a stick may still show the benevolence of the teacher, perhaps more than indifference, and more than the offering of a lesson that he knew would pass far over the head of the one receiving it. If he were to come to us, how would we greet such a man? Having been driven out, he may still be continuing his journey, ready to knock on our door, and what then?

Case 111 —Wujiu's Blind Stick —烏臼屈棒

Source: The Blue Cliff Record Case 75.

【中】

jǔ sēng cóng dìng zhōu hé shàng huì lǐ lái dào wū jiù wū jiù
舉。僧從定州和尚會裏，[1] 來到烏臼。烏臼
wèn dìng zhōu fǎ dào hé sì zhè lǐ sēng yún bù bié jiù
問：「定州法道，何似這裏。」僧云：「不別。」臼
yún ruò bù bié gèng zhuàn bǐ zhōng qù biàn dǎ sēng yún bàng tóu yǒu
云：「若不別更轉彼中去。」便打。僧云：「棒頭有
yǎn bù dé cǎo cǎo dǎ rén jiù yún jīn rì dǎ zháo yí gè yě
眼，不得草草打人。」臼云：「今日打著一箇也。」
yòu dǎ sān xià sēng biàn chū qù jiù yún qū bàng yuán lái yǒu rén
又打三下。僧便出去。臼云：「屈棒[2] 元來有人
chī zài sēng zhuǎn shēn yún zhēng nài biāo bīng zài hé shàng shǒu lǐ
喫在。」僧轉身云：「爭奈[3] 杓柄[4] 在和尚手裏。」
jiù yún rǔ ruò yào shān sēng huí yǔ rǔ sēng jìn qián duó jiù shǒu
臼云：「汝若要，山僧回與汝。」僧近前奪臼手
zhōng bàng dǎ jiù sān xià jiù yún qū bàng qū bàng sēng
中棒，打臼三下。臼云：「屈棒，屈棒。」僧
yún yǒu rén chī zài jiù yún cǎo cǎo dǎ zháo gè hàn sēng biàn
云：「有人喫在。」臼云：「草草打著箇漢。」僧便
lǐ bài jiù yún hé shàng què rèn me qù yě sēng dà xiào ér chū
禮拜。臼云：「和尚却恁麼去也。」僧大笑而出。
jiù yún xiāo dé rèn me xiāo dé rèn me
臼云：「消得[5] 恁麼，消得恁麼。」

[1] 【會裏】 [huì lǐ]: "the place where one met [someone else]."

[2] 【屈棒】 [qū bàng]: "to hit someone with a stick unjustly"; 屈 [qū]: "bent" / "to feel wronged."

[3] 【爭奈】 [zhēng nài]: “to be helpless” / “what can [someone] do?”

[4] 【杓柄】 [sháo bǐng]: “the handle of a ladle.”

[5] 【消得】 [xiāo dé]: “it should be [like that].”

【日】

舉す。僧、定州和尚の會裏より來りて烏臼に到る。烏臼問う、「定州の法道、這裏と何似。」僧云く、「別ならず。」臼云く、「若し別ならずんば、更に彼中に轉じ去れ。」便ち打つ。僧云く、「棒頭に眼有り、草草に人を打つこと不得れ。」臼云く、「今日、一箇を打著せり。」又た打つこと三下す。僧便ち出で去る。臼云く、「屈棒を元來人の喫すること有る在。」僧、身を轉じて云く、「爭奈せん杓柄は和尚の手の裏に在り。」臼云く、「汝若し要せば、山僧汝に回與さん。」僧近前って臼の手中の棒を奪い、臼を打つこと三下す。臼云く、「屈棒、屈棒。」僧云く、「人の喫すること有る在。」臼云く、「草草に箇の漢を打著す。」僧、便ち禮拜す。臼云く、「却って恁麼にし去れり。」僧大笑して出づ。臼云く、「恁麼を消得す、恁麼を消得す。」

【E】

A monk came to Wujiu after having visited Master Dingzhou. Wujiu asked: “What is the difference between Dingzhou’s Dharma-way and the Dharma-way here?” The monk said, “No difference.” Wujiu said, “If there is no

difference, go back to him!" and then hit him. The monk said, "The top end of a stick has an eye. One should not hit a man so hastily." Wujiu said, "Today, I hit a man [who deserved it]," and he hit him three more times. The monk then went out. Wujiu said, "There is a man who deserves to eat a blind stick!" The monk turned and said, "What can I do, as the ladle handle is in your hand!" Wujiu said, "If you need it, this mountain-dwelling monk will give it back to you." The monk approached him, snatched the stick from his hand, and hit him three times. Wujiu said, "Blind stick, blind stick!" The monk said, "Here is a man who deserves to eat it!" Wujiu said, "I have hit a lad too hastily!" The monk then made a deep bow. Wujiu said, "Master, is that all right for you?" The monk laughed loudly and left. Wujiu said, "It should be like that! It should be like that!"

The way is riddled with traps and chasms, into which even the most well-traveled may fall. If one thinks that he knows the path, he falls. If one fails to know it, he falls. The pilgrim advances on this path, at his own pace, roaming the earth as the starry sky ineluctably turns, high above his head. When he arrives in a new land, encountering a new master, the reason for his coming may appear superfluous. Isn't the way found in front of one's eyes at all times, and even behind him? There is no difference between the way here and there. Why is the pilgrim wasting his time in useless peregrinations then? Asking this very question means that one has already fallen into the trap. The way is the same here and there, so why distinguish the origin and the destination? There is no here and there outside of the mind. One may tell him to go back from whence he came if there is no difference, but he has never left and never arrived. He is a green leaf carried by the summer wind, to the heights, to the horizon, and yet always on the way of the sky, perfectly one with it. Like a frog in a well, the one caught in the trap nonetheless fails to realize this, and even a thousand years inside it would not teach him what lies beyond the walls of this well.

Being called a master by others on a daily basis, one will inevitably be tempted to believe in the reality of such a pompous title. Exalted by followers, holding onto a walking staff, a symbol of authority, the tool of the man on the way and a weapon to bring back those who stray into the fold. Seeing a younger pilgrim on his earthly peregrinations, the man caught in the mire of "here" and "there," of "masters" and "disciples," sees someone in need of his instruction, by the word or by the sword. He

strikes the offending part of the pilgrim, a blow to the forehead, hoping to cause him to realize that such a journey was unnecessary, as what he seeks is here, right now! It always was here and now. Passing a swift judgment, without knowing the mind of the opponent, it is nonetheless all too easy to get carried away and to assume culpability without proper knowledge. If one thinks he has understood the one standing before him, he surely will be proven wrong. But if one remains attached to rights and wrongs, he also fails to perceive the essence of the way.[91] Thinking he is winning, he loses. Thinking he is losing, he loses. When thinking ceases, and perception is given the front stage, the clouds of the mind are then cleared, and the light of the heavens can shine in all its splendor.

The pilgrim may then boldly snatch the staff from the hands of the master, robbing him of his authority, and in turn strike his forehead, having seen him fall into the trap. Afterward, he extends the staff to him, allowing him to extract himself from the mire. Each holds onto one end, and they playfully wrestle, embodying the way itself, without beginning or end, without winner or loser, without master or disciple. The opposition plays with equality, with neither of them prevailing for long.[92] This is how it should be! Playful combat, a ballet of life and death, heavy blows paired with deep bows, total blindness married with perfect clarity, a seamless alternation of extremes, exactly like the wondrous display offered to each one of us in the heavenly vault, with clarity steadily battling with obscurity, day after day, year after year, with the two elegantly blended one into the other, never stagnating, constantly moving and yet remaining the most stable of the things of our world. Let us now join them, releasing all notions of gain and loss, right and wrong, skillful or inept, and courageously leap over the trap in front of us as we read these lines, beholding the harmony of nature as we experience it, here and now.

Case 112 —Did He Have the Eye? —還具眼么

Source: The Blue Cliff Record Case 76.

[91] See: Villalba, Dokusho. *Hekiganroku. Crónicas del Acantilado Azul.* Miraguano Ediciones. 1994. Page 114: "Vencer o ganar no es difícil. Lo difícil es realizar la Vía sin vencer ni ganar, sin que haya ganador ni vencido."

[92] See Yuanwu's preface on this case: "The sharp-edged treasure sword is always right in front of us. It has the power to kill men and the power to bring men back to life. It is here and there. It can both give and take away. If one wants to brandish it, he may do so. If one wants to lay it down, he may do so. But tell me, how is it when one no longer distinguishes 'host' and 'guest', when one ceases to care of who asks and who replies." Chinese original: 「靈鋒寶劍。常露現前。亦能殺人亦能活人。在彼在此。同得同失。若要提持。一任提持。若要平展。一任平展。且道不落賓主。不拘回互時如何。」, From: 《佛果圜悟禪師碧巖錄》。 CBETA (Case 75).

【中】

jǔ dān xiá wèn sēng shén chù lái sēng yún shān xià lái
舉。丹霞 問僧：「甚處來。」僧云：「山下來。」
xiá yún chī fàn liǎo yě wèi sēng yún chī fàn liǎo xiá
霞 云：「喫飯了也未。」僧云：「喫飯了。」霞
yún jiāng fàn lái yǔ rǔ chī di rén huán jù yǎn ma sēng wú yǔ
云：「將飯來與汝喫底人，還具眼麼。」僧無語。
cháng qìng wèn bǎo fú jiāng fàn yǔ rén chī bào ēn yǒu fèn wèi shén
長慶 問 保福：「將飯與人喫，報恩有分，[1] 為什
me bù jù yǎn fú yún shī zhě shòu zhě èr jù xiā hàn
麼不具眼。」福 云：「施者受者，二俱[2] 瞎漢。」
cháng qìng yún jìn qí jī lái huán chéng xiā fǒu fú yún dào
長慶 云：「盡其機來，[3] 還成瞎否。」福 云：「道
wǒ xiā dé ma
我瞎得麼。」

[1] 【有分】 [yǒu fèn]: “to be destined to [something].” Here, by the law of Karmic retribution.

[2] 【俱】 [jù]: “together” / “alike.”

[3] 【盡其機來】 [jìn qí jī lái]: “to exhaust this activity [of the mind] to the end.” 機 [jī] can mean “activity” or “function” of the mind, and is also related to the notion of “opportunity.” It is often opposed to the notion of “use” (用) or to “material things” (事). For other uses of this word, see case 88, case 108, and case 168. See also: 「盡其機來，就是盡機起用，所謂『大機大用』者是也。大機就是佛性，大用就是佛性的妙用。」From: 吳平。《新譯碧巖集》。台北：三民書局股份有限公司, 2005. Page 819.

【日】

こ たんか そう と いずこ き
舉す。丹霞、僧に問う、「甚處よりか來たる。」
そういわ さん ふもと き か いわ めし
僧云く、「山の下より來たる。」霞云く、「飯を
きっ おわ や そういわ めし きっ おわ か
喫し了る也未。」僧云く、「飯を喫し了れり。」霞
いわ めし も き なんじ きっ てい
云く、「飯を將ち來たりて汝に喫せしめし底の
ひと は め ぐ そう ご な ちょうけい ほ
人、還た眼を具せしや。」僧、語無し。長慶、保
ふく と めし ひと きっ ぶつおん むく
福に問う、「飯を人に喫せしむるは、恩を報ゆ
ぶん あ なにゆえ め ぐ ふく
るに分有り。爲什麼にか眼を具せざる。」福
いわ ほどこ もの う もの ふた とも かっかん
云く、「施す者と受く者と、二り俱に瞎漢なり。」
ちょうけいいわ そ き つく き は かつ な
長慶云く、「其の機を盡し來たるに、還た瞎と成る

否(や)。」云(いわ)く、「我(われ)は瞎(かつ)す、と道(い)いて得(よろ)しきや。」

【E】

Danxia asked a monk: “Where have you come from?” The monk answered: “From the foot of the mountain.” Danxia asked: “Have you eaten your meal?” The monk said, “Yes, I have eaten it.” Danxia said, “The one who brought the meal and gave it to you, did he have the eye?” The monk remained speechless. Changching asked Baofu: “Surely, it is when one is called by [the law of Karmic] retribution to repay acts of kindness that one brings meals and gives them to people to eat. Why would this one not have the eye?” Baofu said, “The one who serves and the one who receives, both are blind lads.” Changching said, “If one exhausts to the end this activity [of the mind], does he still remain blind, or not?” Baofu said, “Do you call me blind?”

Behind the most familiar, the most mundane, may lie a doorway opening up a passage toward the infinite, the extraordinary. Where do you come from? This question, heard almost systematically when we encounter a new face while we walk on the path of our life, is a great abyss. It is the heavens themselves, vast and empty, sublime and unfathomable, the source and the destination of all that is.[93] One’s walk of life may be revealed by the answer given to the stranger, but one will never be sure, and to draw a line between the fool and the wise, the novice and the master, is to still be caught in the mire of the world. Where do we come from? A man of the world will naturally state the name of his home province or city, as his mind is focused on words, things of the world. A man whose horizon goes beyond the walls made of things by the hands and the mind of man may offer a more lacunary answer, one that avoids drawing a sharp line between the “here” and “there,” one that refrains from cutting out the seamless whole formed by all that is into neat little pieces, arbitrarily drawn, existing only in the mind: “I come from the foot of the mountain.” This mountain has no name. It is not a thing of the world, but rather the whole of the earth itself.[94]

[93]See: 吳平。《新譯碧巖集》。台北：三民書局股份有限公司, 2005. 「『甚處來』，意指父母未生之前的地方。」

[94]See: Villalba, Dokusho. *Hekiganroku. Crónicas del Acantilado Azul.* Miraguano Ediciones. 1994. Page 115: “‘Del pie de la montaña.’ Esto es como decir: ‘Del planeta Tierra.’”

We stand at the foot of countless mountains at this very moment, as this description fits the entirety of the dry land. There is no coming and going, and there is no source and destination, only here and now, extended to the confines of the earth and the sky, and to the most remote past and the most distant future. It may nonetheless also simply mean: "From this mountain, over there!" and one would never be able to tell for sure. The mind of the one standing in front of us forever remains a mystery, an impenetrable sea, which may be as shallow as a fingertip or as deep as the sky itself.

When two mirrors face each other, perfectly aligned, they will see an infinite depth in front of them, failing to distinguish the self from the other, depth and shallowness. When two men of the way discuss with one another, they play with the extremes, in the deep as well as in the shallows, blurring the line between them, not abiding anywhere for long. They, in turn, exalt foolishness and trample on wisdom. They crawl upon the ground to feel one with the stars, and they soar into the highest sky to embrace the entirety of the earth. They see the whole in the most insignificant part, as if they passed through a doorway, and then they see the whole vanish in a puff of smoke, leaving no-thing in its stead, and then their eye is opened, an eye whose pupil is the sun itself, watching the earth, feeding the tree of life with its radiance, allowing it to grow toward the heavens.

When the eye is opened, the essence of all things becomes visible at all times. A meal is brought to you, and you see in it the living things sacrificed so that the intricate machinery of our mortal flesh may continue its activity for a little while longer, or the rain that watered their growth, as it was woven together with the brilliance of our star to build the substance of these nutritious plants. You see the stardust whereof these plants were made, the depths of space from whence they came, and the unfolding of the heavens that they witnessed. You see that there is no-thing in front of you and that things are an illusion of the mind, without this representing a denial of the reality of the wondrous ballet of the heavens unfolding before your eyes. This eye sees the truth of being, with perfect clarity, but this also means that it is completely blind. It is blind to all things. It sees no-thing, not even no-thing-ness itself. There is no "you" and "I," no one that sees and nothing to be seen, only the eye looking at itself, observing the great and sublime void.

Case 113 —All Sounds Are the Sound of the Buddha —一切聲是佛聲

Source: The Blue Cliff Record Case 79.

【中】

jǔ sēng wèn tóu zǐ yí qiè shēng shì fó shēng shì fǒu tóu zǐ
舉。僧問 投子：「一切聲是佛聲，是否。」 投子
yún shì sēng yún hé shàng mò tún fèi wǎn míng shēng tóu zǐ
云：「是。」僧云：「和尚，莫㞞沸碗鳴聲。」[1] 投子
biàn dǎ yòu wèn cū yán jí xì yǔ jiē guī dì yī yì shì
便打。又問：「麁[2] 言及細語，[3] 皆歸第一義，是
fǒu tóu zǐ yún shì sēng yún huàn hé shàng zuò yì tóu lǘ dé
否。」 投子 云：「是。」僧云：「喚和尚作一頭驢得
ma tóu zǐ biàn dǎ
麼。」 投子 便打。

[1] 【㞞沸鳴聲】 [tún fèi míng shēng]: “the sound of a fart”: composed of 㞞 [tún], variant of 豚 “a small pig” / “bottom” / “rump”; 沸 [fèi]: “to boil” / “to be noisy” / “to be tumultuous”; 鳴聲 (S: 鸣声) [míng shēng]: “a sound.”

[2] 【麁】 [cū]: variant of 麤 / 粗 [cū]: “vulgar words” / “coarse language.”

[3] 【細語】 S:【细语】 [xì yǔ]: “to speak with a low voice.”

【日】

こ そう とう す と いっさい おと こ ぶつ
舉す。僧、投子に問う、「一切の聲は是れ佛の
おと ぜ や とう す いわ ぜ そう
聲と、是なり否。」投子云く、「是なり。」僧
いわ おしょう とくふつわんみょうじょう なか とう す
云く、「和尚、㞞沸碗鳴聲すること莫れ。」投子、
すなわ う ま と そ ごんおよ さい ご みな だいいちぎ
便ち打つ。又た問う、「麁言及び細語、皆第一義に
き ぜ や とう す いわ ぜ そう
歸すと、是なり否。」投子云く、「是なり。」僧
いわ おしょう よ いっとう ろば な よろ
云く、「和尚を喚んで一頭の驢と作して得しき
とう す すなわ う
や。」投子、便ち打つ。

【E】

A monk asked Touzi: “‘All sounds are the sound of the Buddha.’ Is it true or not?” Touzi said, “It is true.” The monk said, “Master, don’t fart around so loudly!” Touzi then hit him. He asked again: “‘Loudly uttered coarse words and delicately murmured phrases, they all return to the first principle.’ Is this true or not?” Touzi said, “It is true.” The monk said, “What if one were to call the master a donkey — What then?” Touzi then hit him.

When one's hand strikes a bell with a hammer, this movement has begun during the very inception of the universe. Eons of revolutions of our galaxy were involved in its preparation, with the entirety of the heavens playing their part in it, until all elements converged, with the totality of the life of our bloodline, up to the first spark of life that miraculously bewitched the dead earth, pointing to this precise instant. When the metal is struck, it imparts the tremor seizing it to the air, its voice resounds throughout the sky, slowly fading away, but never completely disappearing, with no one able to tell when it stops or to what point it can be heard. Each noise resounding in our ears, each growl uttered by a beast or word pronounced by a man is also a note played by the way of the sky itself, and we are all its instruments. There is no frontier between sounds and the commotion of the heavens, between voices and the bustle of the world. There is only the great whirlwind of the skies, without beginning or end, without divisions or eras. Only within the walls of man's world are things separated between the elevated and the lowly, the noble and the vulgar, the fitting and the inappropriate.

Therefore, may one dare to say that it is true that all sounds are the voice of the essence of being? The answer should be a resounding "yes," one that shatters all doubt and destroys the very distinction between what "is" and what "is not," between truth and illusion.[95] In the heavens and upon the earth, the crystalline purity of the sound of the temple bell is no different from a fart. To be a man of the way is, even so, to be more than a rock or a cloud, permanently engulfed and abiding in no-thing-ness, outside of the walls of the world. It is to be a bridge between world and earth, between things and no-thing-ness, intimate with both but abiding in neither, playing with them without being attached or captured by them. Paying no attention to the order of the world, one may be tempted to deliberately provoke those attached to it, such as by loudly farting in the temple hall or insulting an elder. This would, all the same, not be a mark of one's liberation from the yoke of the world, of one's freedom from attachment to things. On the contrary, being amused by such childish behavior only demonstrates one's nature as a slave of the world, a servant of its things. He is then only a slave who wrestles against his chains, battling against the order of the world, rather than

[95]See: Yamada, Kou'un, *Hekiganroku (Blue Cliff Record)* [Unpublished manuscript] : "Here is a monk asking Touzi if all the sounds in the world are truly the voice of the Buddha. Touzi's answer, 'Right', transcends all distinctions of difference and equality. Touzi speaks while observing the living fact. In this respect, his answer is the same as Zhaozhou's Mu." Original Japanese: 「今日の則は別に難しいところはありませんが、投子の素晴らしい力量を味わって下さい、趙州は「無」で、投子は「是」の一言で一切の分別妄想を断ち切ったわけです。便ち打つ、が素晴しい。」From: 山田耕雲。《碧岩集提唱山田耕雲》。[Unpublished manuscript] (The wording of the "official" translation differs significantly from the original text).

simply letting go of the chains and releasing his grip upon this world.[96] One who sees the essence of the skies does not feel compelled to rebel against the order of the world. He goes with its flow, accompanying it without thought and without will, letting his hand be guided by the sounds echoing through the air, the stick in his hand striking the temple bell when the assembly should congregate, and hitting the forehead of the fool when a torrent of thoughts is overwhelming his feeble mind, in the hope that the sound produced by it would wake him up, dispelling the illusions that hold sway over him.

Case 114 —Linji's Blind Donkey —臨際瞎驢

Source: The Book of Serenity Case 13.

【中】

jǔ lín jì jiāng shì miè zhǔ sān shèng wú qiān huò hòu
舉。臨際 將示滅。[1] 囑[2] 三聖：「吾遷化後，
bù dé miè què wú zhèng fǎ yǎn cáng shèng yún zhēng gǎn miè què hé
不得滅却吾正法眼藏。」[3] 聖 云：「爭敢滅却和
shàngzhèng fǎ yǎn cáng jì yún hū yǒu rén wèn rǔ zuò me shēng duì
尚正法眼藏。」際 云：「忽有人問汝，作麼生對。」
shèng biàn hè jì yún shéi zhī wú zhèng fǎ yǎn cáng xiàng zhè xiā
聖 便喝。際 云：「誰知，[4] 吾正法眼藏向這瞎
lǘ biān miè què
驢邊滅却。」

[1] 【示滅】 S:【示灭】 [shì miè]: "the death of a monk."

[2] 【囑】 S:【嘱】 [zhǔ]: "to exhort" / "to urge."

[3] 【正法眼藏】 S:【正法眼藏】 [zhèng fǎ yǎn cáng]: "the treasury of the eye of the true Dharma." It refers to the whole teaching of Buddhism (正法). It is the eye that illuminates the entirety of the heavens, and the storehouse that contains everything. According to the Buddhist scriptures, the Buddha gave the treasury of the eye of the true Dharma to his disciple Kāśyapa (迦葉 [Jiā shè]), marking the beginning of the transmission "from heart to heart" of the teaching.

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[96] See: Yamada, Kou'un, *Hekiganroku (Blue Cliff Record)* [Unpublished manuscript]: "To say that all sounds are the voice of the Buddha is to speak from the standpoint of the essential world. But the essential and phenomenal are actually one and the same. In the phenomenal there is distinction. There are things that we must say to our superiors as well as things that we must avoid saying out of respect. Otherwise, everything descends into a state of 'bad equality.' It's all right to say that there are essentially no distinctions but we must never forget this aspect of the phenomenal." Original Japanese: 「ここのところを昔からこう見ています。一切の声は仏声だとは本分の世界から言うことで、現象の世界からみるとアリアリと差別がある。目上の人に対しては言ってはならぬ言葉があるし、言うべき言葉もあって、礼儀を尽さねばならない。そうでないと結局は悪平等になる　平等は平等だけれども現象界のことを忘れての平等だ。」From: 山田耕雲。《碧岩集提唱山田耕雲》。[Unpublished manuscript].

[4] 【誰知】 S:【谁知】 [shéi zhī]: “who would have thought.”

【日】

こ　りんざいまさ　めつ　しめ　さんしょう　ぞく
擧す。臨濟將に滅を示さんとして三聖に囑す。
われ　せんげ　のちわれしょうぼうげんぞう　めっきゃく　え
吾遷化の後吾正法眼藏を滅却することを得ざれ。
しょういわ　いかで　あえ　おしょう　しょうぼうげんぞう　めっきゃく
聖云く、「爭か敢て和尚の正法眼藏を滅却せん。」
ざいいわ　たちま　ひと　あ　なんじ　と　いかに　こた
濟云く、「忽ち人有り汝に問わば作麼生か對えん。」
しょう　すなわ　かつ　ざいいわ　だれ　し　われしょうぼうげんぞう
聖、便ち喝す。濟云く、「誰か知らん吾正法眼藏
こ　かつろへん　むか　めっきゃく
這の瞎驢邊に向って滅却することを。」

【E】

When Linji was about to die, he exhorted [his heir] Sansheng: “After my passing, do not destroy my treasury of the eye of the true Dharma.”[1] Sansheng said, “How would one dare to destroy the Master’s treasury of the eye of the true Dharma?” Linji said, “Suddenly someone asks you [about it] —what will your answer be?” Sansheng immediately shouted: “Haa!” Linji said, “Who would have thought! My treasury of the eye of the true Dharma has been destroyed by this blind donkey!”

[1] “The treasury of the eye of the true Dharma”: See note 3 of the Chinese text.

As soon as he is thrown into the world, an infant is offered things, and he accumulates them year after year as his body grows in strength and his intellect is sharpened with the grindstone of experience. He diligently orders these things, and with them, he builds up a home where he will abide for the rest of his life. Even those who have taken upon themselves the daunting task of unveiling the way of the sky make a sanctuary with their holy things, a treasury of insights into the essence of the heavens, replete with lofty towers of characters and massive fortresses of words and images, describing the sky while veiling it further by obstructing the view of its inhabitants. So pervasive and

so familiar, these treasures come to replace what they represent. He considers that these things are the truth of the skies itself, rather than a mere instrument built to guide his eyes toward it. He holds the power to topple these towers of signs, but he is utterly impotent to move the smallest celestial wheel by the most minute increment.[97] He can build up or raze his world to its foundation, but he is a mere grain of sand on an immense shore in the heavens, without control over its whole, without significant influence.

When one has perceived the absolute vacuity of the world, the pernicious falsehood of the lofty towers of characters and the deep lakes of ink, he lets them go without a trace of regret and dispels all delusions with a resounding shout that shakes the earth and echoes throughout the heavens: "Haa!" This wave passing through the air vigorously washes away all the ink of the world. It wets and dissolves away the sky-high piles of books, leaving only crystal-clear waters reflecting the azure summer sky. When the great wave has passed, remnants of the world emerge, soaked to their core. The characters are legible but faded and blurred, pieces of the world inextricably merged with the earth, a harmonious blending of both realms, belonging to both and neither of them. This deafening shout comes when the power of the things of the world has been exhausted, but when it is the body itself that has exhausted its strength, and the time to return to the earth gets closer, comes the moment to pass on this weapon piercing the ears and the minds.

But how can one transmit something that cannot be possessed? How to pass on something that cannot be seized? As life itself, which emerges through direct and deeply intimate contact between parents, the heavenly fire that burns through one's world to reveal the heavenly vault is propagated through direct exposure. It may take a single day or a lifetime, depending on the nature of the soil upon which the ember is placed, but contact with the flame ignites what it touches, allowing it to spread further, through the earth and through the turns of the heavenly wheels.

Someone who has seen the nature of the heavens then behaves like the heavens themselves, embracing their harmonious display. He is ever-changing, and yet of a perfect regularity. He is ungraspable, and his depth cannot be assessed with the eyes or a voice. He is the all-seeing eye that sees nothing, not even itself, the treasury entirely emptied by the great wave. With a mind clear of all thought, as simple as the mind of a donkey, and eyes plunged in absolute brightness, blind to all things,

[97] See Wansong's comment on this case: "Actually, this thing, it does not increase even when a thousand Buddhas appear in the world, and even when a thousand saints pass away, it does not decrease. How would Sansheng be able to cause it to flourish or to die out?" Chinese original: 「其實此事。千佛出世不增。千聖入滅不減。豈一三聖能興滅哉。」, From: 《萬松老人評唱天童覺和尚頌古從容庵錄》。 CBETA (Case 13).

he becomes a blazing ember, ready to, in turn, ignite those with whom he would come into contact. His tongue will make waves, stirring up the air, but he will not distinguish compliments from rebukes, words of creation and words of destruction.[98] No one will be able to be sure of what goes on between his ears, behind his eyes, as it cannot be seen nor heard, like the essence of the sky itself.

Case 115 —Attendant Kuo Offers Tea —廓侍過茶

Source: The Book of Serenity Case 14.

【中】

jǔ kuò shì zhě wèn dé shān cóng shàng zhū shèngxiàng shén me chù qù
舉。廓侍者問德山：「從上諸聖向什麼處去
yě shān yún zuò me zuò me kuò yún chì diǎn fēi
也。」山云：「作麼，作麼。」廓云：「勅[1]點飛
lóng mǎ bǒ biē chū tóu lái shān biàn xiū qù lái rì shān
龍馬，[2] 跛[3] 鼈[4] 出頭來。」山便休去。來日山
yù chū kuò guò chá yǔ shān shān fǔ kuò bèi yí xià kuò
浴出，廓過茶與山。山撫廓背一下，廓
yún zhè lǎo hàn fāng shǐ piē dì shān yòu xiū qù
云：「這老漢方始[5] 瞥地。」[6] 山又休去。

[1] 【勅】 S:【敕】 [chì]: “an imperial decree.”

[2] 【飛龍馬】: “a flying dragon-horse.” This can refer to a mythical beast or to an exceptionally fast horse.

[3] 【跛】 [bǒ]: “lame” / “crippled.”

[4] 【鼈】 S:【鱉】 [biē]: variant of 鱉 [biē]: “a freshwater soft-shelled turtle.”

[5] 【方始】 [fāng shǐ]: used to refer to the fact that something just happened, like the modern Chinese: 猶才, 方才 .

[6] 【瞥地】 [piē dì]: “suddenly.”

【日】

こ かくじしゃ とくさん と じじょう しょしょういづれ
擧す。廓侍者、德山に問う、「從上の諸聖什麼の
ところ むか さ さんいわ そも そも かく
處に向って去るや。」山云く、「作麼、作麼。」廓

[98] See: Yamada, Kou’un, *Shôyôroku (Book of Equanimity)* [Unpublished manuscript] : “What does ‘blind donkey’ mean? It means there are no thoughts or concepts in his head. All thoughts in your head must disappear completely.”

云く、「飛龍馬を勅點すれば跛鼈出頭來。」山便ち休し去る。來日、山、浴より出づ。廓、茶を過して山に與う。山、廓が背を撫すること一下、廓云く、「這の老漢方に始めて瞥地。」山、又休し去る。

【E】

Attendant Kuo asked Deshan: “Where have all the saints of the past gone?” Deshan said, “What? What?” Kuo said, “A command was given for a horse flying like a dragon [to appear], and it is a crippled tortoise that comes!” Deshan then took his leave. The next day, when Deshan came out of the bath, Kuo served him tea. Deshan [gently] stroked Kuo’s back a little. Kuo said, “This old fellow is only now beginning [to understand]!” Again, Deshan took his leave.

Someone may stand still on the path for an entire lifetime, while a child may advance rapidly, disappearing beyond the horizon of the standing man in a fraction of his existence. When the old encounters the young, he will tend to presume a greater familiarity with the way on his part. After so many years of effort, it would seem natural that he would know more than one who has barely started! To open one’s eyes, despite this fact, demands absolutely no effort. To see the way of the sky requires neither a lengthy journey nor formidable resilience. One needs only to perceive what everywhere present at all times, just as it is, no more, no less. It only takes one step to climb upon the top of the world and see the raw splendor of the heavens beyond its high walls, the absolute void, total no-thing-ness shown as an incomparable and immense display, a splendid swirling of forms and colors, perceived as a totality, without any distinction between the two.

When the young man of the way meets the elder, the former may still respect the natural order of this world to which he is not attached, but with which he, despite this fact, remains in harmony. Without a thought, without any hint of reflection, he expresses his deference to this man, greeting him like a son. As soon as he opens his mouth, the old

man makes a fool of himself, as he asks: "Where have all the saints of the past gone?" There are no saints under the heavens, or any profane person. Those who were here in the past remain here now. They are the industrious bees tasting the succulent nectar of the summer flowers, and the blades of fresh grass elegantly swaying, following the rhythm of the wind. They are here, as there is no other place where they could be. Their teachings can still be heard echoing in the air, if one listens attentively enough. What answer can be given to such words? Perhaps one that attempts to bring back the one lost in the lofty clouds of the world to the earth down below, making use of a word that can encompass the entirety of the heavens and what they contain: "What? What?" The answer is itself a question, wrapping the discussion around like a snake biting its own tail, forming a complete circle, with neither beginning nor end, like the sky itself. This word may point out the sum of all the illusions mentioned by the elder, these clouds that obscure his mind, or it may equally designate the entirety of all that is, the "here" and "now" extended to the confines of the heavens, space and time. It, even so, takes a dweller of the earth, gazing at the naked sky rather than observing the products of the imagination of men, to recognize the depth of this seemingly rudimentary answer.

To a man of the world, the truth of the sky appears as foolish, too plain and simple to embody the essence of all that is. He expects the truth to be manifested as a conspicuous display in the celestial vault, a majestic stallion flying like a dragon, making it appear as clear as the day. Seeing it come to him in the form of a crippled tortoise, he dismisses it without batting an eye, promptly returning to his lofty clouds where he confidently seeks enlightenment. Seeing that his benevolent words fell into a deaf ear, the young therefore attempts another way to show him no-thing-ness itself, by letting him hear the sound of silence, seeing a closed mouth that speaks wonders.

To make silence one's home is a first step. It is putting oneself in front of the door opened toward the essence of the heavens themselves. When one no longer needs words and characters to express his benevolence toward others, he unlocks this door and stands on the threshold, ready to open it. Seeing the elder approaching him with a relaxed face and a teapot in his hand, the young lad is pleased to see the old man offer him a cup of the liquid of life infused with the perfumed fruits of the earth, without any word uttered, seeing in this a beginning of an appropriation of silence, and of the language of the earth, one that uses the hands rather than the tongue. He therefore acknowledges this insight with a gentle stroke on his back, but the elder then opens his mouth, demonstrating that one can never be too sure of one's intention, and of the content of one's mind, as he uttered these words: "This old fellow now finally begins to understand!" The young man failed in his

modest attempt to teach the elder, but his lesson is not in vain, as he teaches us right now how to embrace the order of the world, respecting its hierarchies, but likewise instructs us to use the tools of the world to try to guide others toward a revelation of the way of the sky.[99]

Case 116 —Yangshan Points to Snow —仰山指雪

Source: The Book of Serenity Case 26.

【中】

jǔ yǎng shān zhǐ xuě shī zǐ yún huán yǒu guò dé cǐ sè zhě ma
舉。仰山 指雪師子云：「還有過得此色者麼。」
yún mén yún dāng shí biàn yǔ tuī dǎo xuě dòu yún zhǐ jiě tuī
雲門 云：「當時便與推倒。」雪竇 云：「只解推
dǎo bù jiě fú qǐ
倒，不解扶起。」

【日】

こ きょうざん せっしし さ いわ かえ
擧す。仰山、雪師子を指して云く、「還って
こ しき す う もの あ うんもんいわ そのかみ
此の色を過ぎ得る者有りや。」雲門云く、「當時
すなわ た すいとう せっちょういわ ただすいとう げ
便ち與めに推到せん。」雪竇云く、「只推到を解し
ふ き げ
て扶起を解せず。」

【E】

Yangshan pointed to a snow lion[1] and said, “Is there any [color] that goes beyond this color?” Yunmen [heard of this question and] said, “At that time, one would have helped and knocked it over.” Xuedou [, in turn, hearing of this reply,] said, “[this one] only knows how to knock it over, but not how to raise it up.”

[99] See Wansong’s preface on this case: “At times, a cotton ball inside a piece of iron. At times, a hard stone inside a brocade. Using what is hard to overpower what is weak, this is in the order of things. When one encounters what is strong while he is weak, what happens then?” Chinese original: 「有時鐵裹綿團。有時錦包特石。以剛決柔則故是。逢強即弱事如何。」, From: 《萬松老人評唱天童覺和尚頌古從容庵錄》。CBETA (Case 14).

[1] "A snow lion": Usually interpreted to mean a statue of a lion covered with snow.

When the bright season comes, and the earth is abundantly flooded with heavenly fire while life unrestrainedly sprouts from the earth, the eyes of man feast on a seemingly infinite harvest of hues and shapes, vividly painted flowers, emerald leaves dancing together with golden ears of wheat, under the clear azure dome encompassing our planet. The summer is when the world shines and all things are exposed, with all their differences, standing in contrast to each other.

At the other end of the celestial wheel marking the passing of the years, winter is the season when contrasts fade away, when the bright colors are washed away by the rain and the winds, with the trees stripped of their delicate coat of leaves, the penumbrous sky veiled in woolly clouds, and the world and the earth equally covered with a blanket of pristine snow. The snow gently descending from the heavens conceals the earth and the world, thereby revealing the essence of the all-encompassing realm above them. It covers all things with light, the grass and the statues alike, softly erasing the lines demarcating these things. The icy flakes form bridges between all things, highlighting their unicity, displaying their shared essence to the man beholding this winter scenery. The earth and the sky become hardly distinguishable, and all that is seen is brightness, with only vague contours faintly standing out from the whole, traces of the world under this frigid but wondrous canopy. The uniformity and purity of this porcelain landscape become a source of blindness to the one losing himself in it. The last color, the radiant whiteness, then disappears, and no colors are left. This represents the last disappearance, after the retreat of all things into concealment. Nothing remains to be seen.

The alluring purity of the snowy blanket covering the earth and the world may, however, also reveal itself to hide a deep chasm into which one may easily fall and find himself trapped. Blind to all contrasts and all things, forgetting himself in the great void while failing to remember that he is a son of the earth and the world, he is in danger of himself becoming a mere statue, a dead thing, forever immobile and blind.[100] Abiding in blindness, in no-thing-ness, one loses his humanity, and he is unable to

[100]See: Roloff, Dietrich. *Cong-Rong-Lu – Aufzeichnungen aus der Klause der Gelassenheit: Die 100 Kôan des Shôyôroku.* Windpferd Verlagsgesellschaft mbH, 2008. Page 133: "'Wäre ich damals dabei gewesen, ich hätte ihn (den Löwen) sogleich mit umgestoßen!' ... es Yang-shan (und mit ihm Yun-men) darum geht, seine Mönche aus der Verhaftung an etwas zu befreien, das sich in der Farbe Weiß symbolisiert. Und das ist - nicht der Dharmakäya, sondern eine bestimmte Einstellung zu ihm, nämlich sich in der Eintönigkeit der Großen Leere, in der Stille und ‚Reinheit' des Nichts

guide others on the path of liberation from the pernicious delusions of the world. Attached to indiscrimination, he soils the immaculate blanket of snow, and once again becomes ensnared by illusions. But at this moment, someone suddenly appears and knocks the snow-covered statue over, causing its rocky skin to be exposed to the eyes of the bewildered onlookers. The spell has been broken with a swift blow. The blanket of light has been violently rent, and the world underneath once again appears, a contrast between light and darkness, the void and the thing. The observer who lost himself in no-thing-ness is suddenly brought back to the world, saved from the snare, shown that he should not abide anywhere, even in the place where there is not a single thing.

To bring someone back into the world is nonetheless easier than to guide someone out of it. The statue that has been knocked down could soon also become a trap if it becomes the object of an attachment. The return of contrasts implies a return of the dangers of the world, its sneaky cohort of illusions. The man of the way does not abide in indiscrimination, nor does he dwell in the realm of contrasts between things. The statue must be raised, and one must patiently wait for the heavens to once again perform their wondrous work of concealment of the things of the world, revealing the essence of the heavens, no-thing-ness itself. There is no end to this path, as there is no beginning. A pulsing heart, a leaping grasshopper, a sun rising and falling daily, this is what this is about.

Case 117 —Yunmen's White and Black — 雲門白黑

Source: The Book of Serenity Case 40.

【中】

jǔ yún mén wèn qián fēng qīng shī dá huà fēng yún dào
舉。雲門 問 乾峯：「請師答話。」 峯 云：「到
lǎo sēng yě wèi mén yún rèn me bié mǒu jiǎ zài chí yě fēng
老僧也未。」 門 云：「恁麼別某甲在遲也。」[1] 峯
yún rèn me nà rèn me nà mén yún jiāng wèi hóu bái gèng
云：「恁麼那，恁麼那。」 門 云：「將謂侯白，[2] 更
yǒu hóu hēi
有侯黑。」

[1] 【恁麼別某甲在遲也】 [nèn me bié mǒu jiǎ zài chí yě]: "if understood like this, this one (i.e., "me") may have been [too] late." Some versions have 則 instead of 別 .

gleichsam häuslich einzurichten, um weiterer ‚Befleckung' durch weltliches Tun für immer zu entgehen."

[2]【侯白】[hóu bái]: This refers to a famous story of the time, in which the thief Marquis White is outsmarted by Marquise Black, another thief. The story is as follows: "There was a man named Marquis White in Fujian, who was good at tricking people, and was hated and feared by the people in all the surrounding villages, and no one dared to defy him. One day, he met a woman, Marquise Black, on the road. She stood by the well, pretending to have lost something. Marquis White asked her what she was doing. Marquise Black said: 'Unfortunately, I have dropped my earrings into the well. They are worth about one hundred taels of gold. If anyone can pick them out, I will share half of them as a token of my appreciation. Wouldn't you like to do this?' Marquis White pondered for a long time before he came up with an idea and said, 'You, a woman, have lost your earrings, so if you pick them out, you must then give me half of them, or I will not give them to you.' So, she promised him that she would. Marquis White then took off his clothes, left them by the well, and then went down the well. When Marquise Black reckoned that Marquis White had reached the surface of the well, she carried off all Marquis White's clothes, leaving him helpless, not knowing where to go. So nowadays Fujianese people refer to those who count on each other using this proverb: 'I am like Marquis White, and he is more like Marquise Black.'" (See: 「閩有侯白，善陰中人以數，鄉里甚憎而畏之，莫敢與較。一日，遇女子侯黑於路，據井旁，佯若有所失。白怪而問焉。黑曰:"不幸墮洱於井，其直百金。有能取之，當分半以謝，夫子獨無意乎?"白良久，計曰:' 彼女子亡洱，得洱固可給而勿與。' 因許之。脫衣井旁，繼而下。黑度白已至水，則盡取其衣，函去，莫知所塗。故今閩人呼相賣曰:' 我己侯白，伊更侯黑。」From: 《淮海集》。CTEXT, chapter 25.)

【日】

舉す。雲門、乾峰に問う、「師の答話を請う。」峰云く、「老僧に到るや也未しや。」門云く、「恁麼ならば則ち某甲遲きに在り。」峰云く、「恁麼那恁麼那。」門云く、「將に謂えり侯白と、更に侯黑あり。」

【E】

Yunmen asked Qianfeng: "May one ask the Master for an answer?" Qianfeng said, "Have you reached the old monk or not?" Yunmen said, "If so, this monk may have been [too] late." Qianfeng said, "Is that so? Is that so?" Yunmen said, "I thought Marquis White[1] [was here], but I realize that here is Marquise Black!"

[1] "Marquis White": See note 2 of the Chinese text.

When the bridge leading the man of the world to no-thing-ness has been built, and one finds himself going back and forth between the two shores, he may rob others blind of all their possessions, and cast these

down into the bottomless abyss, letting them disappear into the void. When two robbers who possess nothing suddenly face each other, their skills can then be displayed to their full extent.

To embrace the way of the sky is to become a stone skipping upon the waters, swiftly moving, lying low, on the surface between the water and the sky. If it becomes immobile, it succumbs to the omnipresent pull of the earth without delay, sinking to the depths, with the unique majesty of the heavens becoming increasingly difficult to perceive. To such a man, each thing of the world he uses is a red-hot piece of metal thrown into his hands. It must be swiftly passed on or thrown away to avoid being destroyed by its incandescence. Words are like sharpened blades without handles. They can cut right through the illusions of the world, but if they are held on to too tightly, they will cut through one's fingers just as effectively. Therefore, those who see the sky through the things of the world know how to play with these potent weapons, subverting the foundations of the man-made realm. With them, the answer may come before the question, or questions may be answered with other questions, as a refusal to determine a definite answer, one that would put an end to the dialogue, and cause them to both sink into the depths of the mire of determinacy, which is a perilous swamp of illusions.

From another point of view, the question does not need to be asked because there is only one possible question and one possible answer. They do not need to hear the question nor the answer, but neither are they scared to throw them into the air, letting them go freely, without keeping them to themselves. Their words may appear absurd or trivial, but one should hear them as more than mere things of the world. They are waves stirred up in the air, interfering with one another, merged and propagated throughout the heavens, a single sound, a unique note, reverberated, passing through the heart of men and the clouds above the earth, bringing them together. There is nothing to ask and nothing to answer, only no-thing.[101] They thus play with sounds heavily laden with meaning, earth woven together with the world, offered to the sky. If one takes these words seriously, one would be mistaken. The words are without importance to them, as light as a feather, but they reveal the state of mind of those uttering them, and the harmonious play between those entering the dialogue is a sign that a resonance occurs between them, with two minds that are empty of things, throwing back what is offered to them immediately, as they do not need to grasp or possess anything, for they have no-thing, and are no-thing, and thus they let the men of the world try to determine truths, to win over their opponent, or to gain possession of riches. When they rob others, it is only to show them

[101] See: Yamada, Kou'un, *Shôyôroku (Book of Equanimity)* [Unpublished manuscript]: "It's rather strange to ask for an answer without having posed a question. In the essential world, there is no asking or answering. There is nothing to ask and nothing to answer."

their nakedness, their true nature, usually concealed by the garments or jewelry covering their body and clouding their mind. Underneath these things, there is no color, no value, only no-thing-ness, the heavens themselves.

Case 118 —Luopu's End Was Approaching —洛浦臨終

Source: The Book of Serenity Case 41.

【中】

jǔ luò pǔ lín zhōng shì zhòng yún jīn yǒu yí shì wèn ěr zhū rén
舉。洛浦 臨終示眾云：「今有一事，問爾諸人。
zhè gè ruò shì jí tóu shàng ān tóu ruò bú shì jí zhān tóu mì huó shí shǒu
這箇若是即頭上安頭，若不是即斬頭覓活。」時首
zuò yún qīng shān cháng jǔ zú bái rì bù tiǎo dēng pǔ yún shì
座云：「青山常舉足。白日不挑燈。」浦 云：「是
shén me shí jié zuò zhè gè shuō huà yǒu yàn cóng shàng zuò chū yún qù
甚麼時節。作這箇說話。」有彥從 上座出云：「去
cǐ èr tú qīng shī bú wèn pǔ yún wèi zài gēng dào
此二途，請師不問。」浦 云：「未在，更[1] 道。」
cóng yún mǒu jiǎ dào bú jìn pǔ yún wǒ bù guǎn ěr dào jìn dào
從 云：「某甲道不盡。」浦 云：「我不管爾道盡道
bú jìn cóng yún mǒu jiǎ wú shì zhě zhǐ duì hé shàng zhì wǎn
不盡。」從 云：「某甲無侍者祇對和尚。」[2] 至晚
huàn cóng shàng zuò ěr jīn rì zhǐ duì shén yǒu lái yóu hé tǐ dé xiān
喚從 上座：「爾今日祇對甚有來，[3] 由合體得先
shī dào mù qián wú fǎ yì zài mù qián tā bú shì mù qián fǎ fēi
師道：『目前無法。意在目前，他不是目前法。非
ěr mù zhī suǒ dào nà jù shì bīn nà jù shì zhǔ ruò jiǎn dé chū
耳目之所。』到那句是賓，[4] 那句是主。若揀得出，
fēn fù bō dài zi cóng yún bú huì pǔ yún rǔ hé
分付鉢袋子。」從 云：「不會。」浦 云：「汝合[5]
huì cóng yún shí bú huì pǔ hè yún kǔ zāi kǔ
會。」從 云：「實不會。」浦 喝云：「苦哉，苦
zāi sēng wèn hé shàng zūn yì rú hé pǔ yún cí zhōu bú zhào
哉。」僧問：「和尚尊意如何。」浦 云：「慈舟不棹[6]
qīng bō shàng jiàn xiá tú láo fàng mù é
清波[7] 上。劍峽徒勞[8] 放木鵝。」

[1] 【更】 [gēng]: "to change."

[2] 【某甲無侍者祇對和尚】 [mǒu jiǎ wú shì zhě zhǐ duì hé shang]: "this one is unable to reply appropriately." It literally means "This one is a master without [a useful] servant who could reply to him."

[3] 【有來】 S:【有来】 [yǒu lái]: “already.”

[4] 【賓】 S:【宾】 [bīn]: (grammatical) “object”; 主 [zhǔ]: (grammatical) “subject.”

[5] 【合】 [hé]: old variant of 盒 [hé]: “fully” / “entirely.”

[6] 【櫂】 S:【棹】 [zhào]: “to row.”

[7] 【清波】 [qīng bō]: “a clear stream of water.”

[8] 【徒勞】 S:【徒劳】 [tú láo]: “a useless effort.”

【日】

舉す。洛浦臨終衆に示して云く、「今一事あり爾諸人に問う、「這箇若し是といわば即ち頭上頭を安ず、若し不是ならば即ち頭を斬って活を覓む。」時に首座云く、「青山常に足を擧げ、白日燈を挑げず。」浦云く、「是れ甚麼の時節ぞ、這箇の說話を作す。」彦從上座あり出て云く、「此の二途を去って請う師問わざれ。」浦云く、「我が道い盡すと道い盡さざるとを管せず。」從云く、「某甲侍者の和尚に祇對する無し。」晚に到って從上座を喚ぶ。「爾今日祇對甚だ來由あり、合に先師の道を體得すべし。目前に法なく、意目前にあり。他はこれ目前の法にあらず、耳目の到る所に非ず。那句かこれ賓、那句かこれ主、若し揀得出せば鉢袋子を分付せん。」從云く、「不會。」浦云く、「汝會すべし。」從云く、「實に不會。」浦、喝して云く、「苦なる哉、苦なる哉。」僧問う、「和尚の尊意如何。」浦云く、「慈舟清波の上に棹さず、劍峽徒に木鵝を放つに勞す。」

【E】

When Luopu's end was approaching, he addressed his congregation and said, "Today, there is something I need to ask you all. If you say, 'It is so', it is like putting another head on top of your own. If you say, 'It is not so', it is like looking for life by cutting off your head." At that moment, the head monk said, "The green mountain always lifts up its legs; In the daylight, one has no need to carry a lantern." Luopu said, "What time is this to utter such a saying?" Yancong, a senior monk, stepped forward and said, "Besides going on these two paths, please, Master, do not ask [for something more]." Luopu said, "You're not there yet. Give another reply." Yancong said, "This one is unable to reply appropriately." Luopu said, "I don't care whether or not you can say it fully." Yancong said, "This one is helpless and has no answer to give to the Master." That evening, Luopu called Yancong to him and said, "What you answered today already had something [satisfactory] in it. It well fits with what our late master said: 'There are no things[3] before the eyes, and yet meaning is found before the eyes. 'It' is not the thing before the eyes, and 'it' is not found within the reach of eyes and ears.' In this quote, which phrase is the object? Which phrase is the subject? If you can pick them out, I will transmit the bowl and the robe[1] to you." Yancong said, "I don't understand." Luopu said, "You can understand it fully." Yancong said, "I really don't understand." Luopu shouted a 'Haa!' and said, "Alas! Alas!" A monk asked: "What is the venerable master trying to say?" Luopu said, "The boat of compassion is not rowed over clear waves. It is futile to release wooden geese down a precipitous gorge."[2]

[1] "The robe": Literally "the bag."

[2] "To release wooden geese down a precipitous gorge": The wooden geese were used to prevent collisions where visibility was low, such as when passing through serpentine gorges. They warned ships downstream of the presence of another ship.

When the time comes to breathe the last breath and let go of the fire of life itself, knowing that this is not an end, just as one's birth was not a beginning, this fire can be passed on like a blazing torch offered

to someone who will need it to light up the path in front of the next generation. But among a throng of people, how does one find someone worthy of this fire, someone apt to guide others and not lead them astray? The dying master presents them a question, a trial by words, one that is both the simplest and the hardest to pass, a perfect assessment of one's relationship with the way of the sky itself: "Tell us all: is it so, or is it not so?" They are given the choice between death by drowning or by fire. If one says that "it is so," he is caught in the trap of baseless affirmation and imprudent determinacy. If one says that "it is not so," he is ensnared in the pit of blind denial and ungrounded assertion. Given the choice between two things of the world, one is still not condemned to choose either. When the eye is opened, they both appear as mere illusions, obscuring the sublime truth of the sky that shines behind them. It is by clearing the space in front of one's eye of all things that it may appear, as the bright torch that will someday be brought into the heart of the world, into the mind of all men, enlightening them all, igniting all things until they are turned to dust, scattered by the winds, spreading like a wildfire engulfing the entirety of the land.

It is easy for the followers to see the trap and the snare, and they thus refrain from picking and choosing. To offer a pertinent answer is yet another matter. They are all at the foot of an immense mountain encompassing the entire earth, carried on the way, always moving around our star, perpetually changing, and nothing they do will affect its course by more than a hairbreadth. They are all standing under the sky illuminated by the great luminary of the day, and therefore the modest flame that they carry with them is insignificant compared to the heavenly radiance. Whatever they say or do, whatever they choose or reject, "it" will remain as "it" is and as "it" should be. The two paths in front of them are but a mirage, caused by the brilliance of the luminary illuminating their world, but their eyes are still dazzled by the light, and thus, they have yet to find their way.

If they are to see "it," they must first see the nature of the things before their eyes, see that these things emerged out of no-thing-ness and were laden with meaning to become things of their world, without, all the same, changing their essence. "It" lies beyond the appearance, beyond the thing, and yet "it" is no different from them. The only difference is that these things became objects of our attention, while we become the subjects of such attention. As soon as the opposition between subject and object arises out of no-thing-ness, "it" becomes concealed by the objects found before our eyes, retreating beyond the reach of our senses, until we cause the collapse of the object into the subject, the subject into the object, once again unveiling the underlying essence of all that is.

An appropriate answer to the question therefore breaks the spell causing man to see two different paths, whereas there is no choice, only

the way of the sky itself. It may be the first word uttered by mankind, the cornerstone of his world, the great shout that means everything and nothing, incarnating in the air the innermost feeling overwhelming his heart, which he cannot put into words. If the master, despite this fact, stands among a throng of dwellers of the world who have yet to contemplate the purity of the heavens, he may be left with only silence to hear, much to his despair. But one who has been consumed by the great fire and turned to ashes carried to the highest skies by the delicate hands of the winds will, however, not worry about the destiny of the fire that remains upon the earth, for he knows that it is futile to attempt to steer the great vessel carried upon the way of the sky. The fire may be reduced to the faintest spark for entire eons, and yet suddenly be fanned once again into a brazier that will burn the world to its foundation and clear out the view obscured by its walls, letting the celestial radiance suddenly flood the eyes of a new generation of men, with everything being as it should, and no-thing being at the center of "it" all.

Case 119 —Mishi and the White Rabbit —密師白兔

Source: The Book of Serenity Case 56.

【中】

jǔ mì shī bó yǔ dòng shān xíng cì jiàn bái tù zi miàn qián
舉。密師 伯[1] 與洞山 行次，見白兔子面前
zǒu guò mì yún jùn zāi shān yún zuò me shēng mì
走過。密 云：「俊[2] 哉。」山 云：「作麼生。」密
yún rú bái yī bài xiàng shān yún lǎo lǎo dà dà zuò zhè gè
云：「如白衣拜相。」[3] 山 云：「老老大大作這箇
yǔ huà mì yún ěr yòu zuò me shēng shān yún jī dài
語話。」密 云：「爾又作麼生。」山 云：「積代[4]
zān yīng zàn shí luò bó
簪纓，[5] 暫時落薄。」[6]

[1] 【伯】 [bó]: "father's elder brother"/ "senior" / "respectful form of address."

[2] 【俊】 [jùn]: "excellent."

[3] 【拜相】 [bài xiàng]: "to be appointed prime minister."

[4] 【積代】 S:【积代】 [jī dài]: "for several generations."

[5] 【簪纓】S:【簪缨】[zān yīng]: "crown ornaments." A metaphor for something precious.

[6] 【薄】 [bó]: "to be insignificant" / "weak."

【日】

舉す。密師伯、洞山と行く次で、白兎子の面前に走過するを見て、密云く、「俊なる哉。」山云く、「作麼生。」密云く、「白衣の相に拜せらるるが如し。」山云く、「老老大大として這箇の語話をなす。」密云く、「爾又作麼生。」山云く、「積代の簪纓暫時落薄す。」

【E】

As Uncle[1] Mishi and Dongshan were walking together, they saw a white rabbit run by in front of them. Mishi said, “An excellent one!” Dongshan said, “In what way?” Mishi said, “It is just like being appointed prime minister and wearing white clothes.”[1] Dongshan said, “Such a great man, so advanced in age, and still saying something like that...” Mishi said, “Then how about you?” Dongshan said, “A great house through generations, but for now at least, it has fallen and become insignificant.”

[1] “Uncle”: See note 1 of the Chinese text.

[2] “White clothes,” that is, clothes worn by commoners.

Overjoyed by one’s liberation from the noose of the trapper, and speedily running through the grasses, it is easy to fall into a pit. One must then wait to be extracted from it by a human being, not knowing whether he will be greeted with a warm embrace or with a knife. If one has succeeded in stripping himself of the burden of the things of the world but holds on tightly to the last thing that remains, it is as if he were back where he started. One must learn to let go, but also not to let this “letting go” itself become an object, a thing of the world, cherished and possessed. He must let go of “letting go” itself, throwing the very concept of no-thing-ness itself into the deepest oblivion.

Leisurely strolling through the countryside on a sunny summer day, a man and his companion witness the passing of a white rabbit through a meadow, while countless industrious bees harvest the flower’s succulent

gifts to make honey, and insects are busying themselves to collect what they need to feed their young. The branches of the trees, heavily laden with juicy fruits, are balanced by torrid winds, as the rays of the radiant star feed with its gilded light the emerald leaves covering them. Contemplating this extremely ordinary and yet sublime scenery, one of the men lets out a few words, joining the songs of the birds resonating through the air: "An excellent one!" What is excellent here? No one may read the mind of the one who has uttered these words. The truth is only in the eye of the beholder, and the audience is condemned to mere speculations. It may be the rabbit whose swiftness impressed the onlooker, or it may as well be the scenery as a whole, without distinction between the parts forming it. An excellent thing, because there is only one thing in the entire universe, and it is here and now, exposed to our perplexed gaze! There is no rabbit nor bees nor trees nor meadow, only the unfathomable totality of the skies carried on the way, which itself in its essence is not even a "thing" at all, outside of the mind of man.

Interrogated further concerning what it is that he considers excellent here, the man, without a thought, replies with the words: "It is like a king clothed with white cotton!" His companion is appalled by these words. How could a man so advanced in years, so experienced in the art of avoiding falling into the traps of the world, still be caught comparing kings and commoners, the golden robes of royalty and the white cotton clothes of the plebs! He shamelessly uses words laden with arbitrary hierarchies, illusions of greatness and lowliness, as would any man of the world, without having for a single instant practiced the embracing of the way of the sky. He comes from a noble house, but alas, it has now fallen and become insignificant.

Hastily judging his fellow, the companion nonetheless fails to realize that he is the one caught in the trap he warns others about. When the king clothed in white cotton is mentioned, these words indeed do not intrinsically imply the validation of oppositions and hierarchies. The companion is the one associating the king with the high position in the world, and the cotton clothes with those worn by men of low status, not he who uttered these words. This is exactly the same situation as the one concerning what was excellent before their eyes. The delusions that he attributes to his companion are those holding sway over his mind, without him realizing this. He sees the one standing next to him as coming from a noble house, now fallen, not seeing that he himself holds on to the oppositions between noble and commoner, high and low. Being so attached to the notion of not being attached, he stands still on the path, his eyes veiled by the towering walls of things of the world. But this fate may also befall us if we do not pay close attention to the valuable lesson that this man failed to learn. What we see in the words of both men is also largely the product of our interpretation, a reflection of our

mind as much as theirs, and thus we should consider the possibility that we may be mistaken and that the truth may completely differ from the vision we have of it. We should observe our judgments, seeing a reflection of ourselves in them, and see that we are also no more than a fleeting illusion.

Case 120 —Mihu's Enlightened or Not —
米胡悟否

Source: The Book of Serenity Case 62.

【中】

jǔ mǐ hú lìng sēng wèn yǎng shān jīn shí rén huán jiǎ wù fǒu
舉。米胡 令僧問 仰山：「今時人還假悟否。」
shān yún wù jí bù wú zhēng nài luò dì èr tóu hé sēng huí
[1] 山 云：「悟即不無，爭奈[2] 落第二頭何。」僧迴
jǔ sì mǐ hú hú shēn kěn zhī
舉似米胡，胡 深肯之。

[1] 【還假悟否】 [huán jiǎ wù fǒu]: "[do people] borrow enlightenment or not?" It seems to imply that to be enlightened as a result of the reception of a teaching constitutes a mere "borrowing," rather than a true appropriation, as a result of a direct and personal experience. The people of their time would therefore have been mistaken about what enlightenment really is. Yasutani interprets it as: "Do people these days need to attain enlightenment or not?" (See: 安谷白雲。《従容録新装版: 禅の心髄》。東京：春秋社, 2008. Page 347:「『人間はどうしても悟らなければならないものですか』ということだ。」); 還 [hái]: Here, it means "actually"; 假 [jiǎ]: "to borrow."

[2] 【爭奈】 S:【争奈】 [zhēng nài]: "one is unable to avoid" / "to be helpless."

【日】

こ べい こ そう きょうざん と こんじ
舉す。米胡、僧をして仰山に問わしむ、「今時の
ひと かえ ご か いな さん いわ ご すなわ
人還って悟を假るや否や。」山云く、「悟は即ち
な あら だい に とう おち いかんせ そう
無きに非ず、第二頭に落ることを爭奈何ん。」僧
かえ べい こ こじ こ ふか これ うけが
廻って米胡に舉似す。胡深く之を肯う。

【E】

Mihu had a monk ask Yangshan: "The men of our time, do they borrow enlightenment [from others, not experiencing it themselves first-hand,] or not?" Yangshan said, "It is not

that there is no enlightenment, but how can it be helped that it falls into the second class?" The monk went back to tell this to Mihu. Mihu deeply agreed.

When one lets the celestial light pass through him, having become one with the heavens themselves, he no longer has eyes with which he would see this light. The enlightened is burnt to ashes by this fire, and nothing remains of him. He is the light itself, illuminating the world, but itself remains unnoticed. When this enlightenment itself becomes a thing of the world, seized by the minds of men, its light is extinguished, and it becomes one more thing forming the walls veiling the sky.

If one is asked whether the men of our time are mistaken about enlightenment, having discovered it only by borrowing the experiences and knowledge of others, it means that he who asks this question already stands in the shadows, his eyes observing a contrast between bright and dark, the enlightened and the prisoner of delusions, or perhaps only feigns standing there, to teach someone a lesson, dangling a juicy bait in front of a gluttonous mouth. Hearing the word "enlightenment," one may cover his ears and hastily flee at the vulgarity of such an utterance. Hearing such profane discussion, he may, despite this fact, also remain impassive, letting the words enter his ears as mere sounds, or inoffensive means of guiding the people. He may even enter the discussion and let this word come out of his mouth without feeling himself soiled by it, as he stands in a place where there is no purity nor filthiness, no vulgarity nor elegance. Neither abiding in the light nor in the shadows, and not even in the interstice joining them both, he is without concern, without worry, as he is filled with confidence: everything is always as it should, and all things share the same essence, the same home, where there is neither light nor dark, no enlightenment nor delusion.

It is, even so, arduous for the prisoner of the world to get rid of his chains, as he sees them as the tools allowing him to live, extensions of his limbs, and the foundation of his existence. To guide him, cunningness is a potent weapon. Entrapping the prisoner inside his cell, showing him the absurdity of his conduct, the narrowness of his worldview, he may realize his own condition and feel the chains weighing on his body. Uttering a few simple words, one may shake up the walls holding a whole people prisoner: "How can we avoid that enlightenment falls into a second class?" How could the light of non-discrimination, which clears the mind of all things, be seen in terms of classes or layers? The absurdity of the question only points out the ridicule of all argumentation concerning the presence and nature of such enlightenment. Pushing a vacuous discussion to its end, one may perhaps see that it should not be the subject of

debates, of measures and assessments. This word, this skillful means offered to mankind, should only be like the northern star, a beacon guiding those advancing on a path whose destination they have yet to discover. It is of no use to them to endlessly debate the nature of this star. They only have to steadily follow its light, letting go of all the things burdening their shoulders, and then they may see themselves in its twinkling, forgetting themselves on the way.

Case 121 —Jiufeng's Head and Tail —九峯頭尾

Source: The Book of Serenity Case 66.

【中】

jǔ sēng wèn jiǔ fēng rú hé shì tóu fēng yún kāi yǎn
舉。僧問九峯：「如何是頭。」峯云：「開眼
bù jué xiǎo sēng yún rú hé shì wěi fēng yún bú zuò wàn nián
不覺曉。」僧云：「如何是尾。」峯云：「不坐萬年
chuáng sēng yún yǒu tóu wú wěi shí rú hé fēng yún zhōng shì bú
床。」僧云：「有頭無尾時如何。」峯云：「終是不
guì sēng yún yǒu wěi wú tóu shí rú hé fēng yún suī bǎo
貴。」僧云：「有尾無頭時如何。」峯云：「雖飽
wú lì sēng yún zhí dé tóu wěi xiāng chèn shí rú hé fēng
無力。」[1] 僧云：「直得頭尾相稱[2] 時如何。」峯
yún ér sūn dé lì shì nèi bù zhī
云：「兒孫得力，室內不知。」

[1] 【雖飽無力】 [suī bǎo wú lì]: "even satiated, one has no strength." It seems to imply that what was done is useless.

[2] 【相稱】 [xiāng chèn]: "to match"/ "to suit."

【日】

こ そう きゅうほう と いか こ ず ほう
舉す。僧、九峰に問う、「如何なるか是れ頭。」峰
いわ まなこ ひら あかつき おぼ そういわ いか
云く、「眼を開いて曉を覺えず。」僧云く、「如何な
こ び ほういわ ばんねん ゆか ざ そう
るか是れ尾。」峰云く、「萬年の牀に坐せず。」僧
いわ ず あ び な とき いかん ほういわ つい
云く、「頭有って尾無き時如何。」峰云く、「終に
こ とうと そういわ び あ ず な とき
是れ貴からず。」僧云く、「尾有って頭無き時

如何。」峰云く、「飽と雖も力なし。」僧云く、「直に頭尾相稱うことを得る時如何。」峰云く、「兒孫力を得て室内知らず。」

【E】

A monk asked Jiufeng: “What is the head?” Jiufeng said, “Opening the eyes and not perceiving the dawn.” The monk said, “What is the tail?” Jiufeng said, “Not sitting on a ten-thousand-year-old bed.” The monk said, “What if there is a head, but no tail?” Jiufeng said, “After all, it is not valuable.” The monk said, “What if there is a tail, but no head?” Jiufeng said, “Even though one is satiated, one has no strength.” The monk said, “And when the head matches the tail?” Jiufeng said, “The descendants will gain strength, but it is not known in the room.”

Each one of us is a body thrown onto the earth, under the sky, even before our birth. We are a link in a long, uninterrupted chain whose origin is lost. We are a whole, a totality that remains living only because the incredibly intricate piece of machinery animating it finds itself in perfect equilibrium, with each part at its place, playing the role assigned to it. Without the upper part of one’s body, there is no perception, and without its lower part, no nutrition. Both depend upon one another, and there can be no life without their harmonious interplay. The eyes are used to seek one’s sustenance, and the belly digests it to replenish the strength exhausted during this search. Seeing only the whole, the role played by the different parts becomes unfathomable, but seeing only the parts, one loses sight of their integration and of how they form a harmonious totality that is more than the sum of these parts. Just like the upper and lower parts, the contrast between the perception of the whole and the perception of the parts is necessary to perceive the nature of the body, and this is also the case concerning other elements of nature, and even one’s existence.

When one has been freed from the yoke of the world, one then becomes a dragon ready to swallow the earth and the sky. Its head soars into the air, but when it opens up its eye at the break of dawn, erect and turned toward the east, it does not perceive the dawn. It perceives

no-thing, as there is nothing to be perceived when one is far above the walls of the world. Its heavy and strong tail rests upon the eons-old ground, the rocky earth, but the creature does not feel its firmness, nor the incredibly strong pull of the planet, jealously holding all things within its reach close to its craggy skin. The dragon feels no-thing, as there is nothing to be felt when one is far above the ramparts of the world.

When one has abandoned the world to take refuge into no-thing-ness, the great desert, he becomes a headless man, a mere body wriggling in the vast wasteland, perceiving nothing, feeling nothing, only enjoying the serenity of the place where there is no value nor meaning, no head nor tail, no earth and sky, no world nor no-thing-ness itself, as a thing, an object of thought. This nonetheless comes at a price: he is fulfilled, satiated, but is completely powerless, blind and impotent to move a single strand of hair upon the earth.

When one emerges out of no-thing-ness to become a dweller of the world, the great citadel of things, he, on the contrary, becomes a seemingly disembodied head, a mere spirit that haunts an immaterial realm, playing with words and concepts, but remains utterly severed from the true essence of the earth and the sky. He wields the powerful weapons of the world, but he is incapable of perceiving the fact that this power is exerted only in his world, and that he has lost touch with both the ground and the heights.

The dragon is thus called to become a bridge between the world of man and the earth and the sky. It is only when the head devours the tail that its own nature is revealed, as it forms a perfect circle, with no beginning or end. Neither abiding in no-thing-ness nor in the world, but instead joining them both while keeping them at bay, it wields the strength of the world, but its mind is perfectly clear. It moves the earth and the sky, but it does not even know it. New links of the great chain emerge, new dragons, new circles linked to one another, carried upon the way of the sky, without anyone who can tell where it begins and where it ends, or whether their home is the bustling citadel of things, or the vast desert where no-thing is to be found.

Case 122 —Daowu's Taking Care of the Sick —道吾看病

Source: The Book of Serenity Case 83.

【中】

jǔ guī shān wèn dào wú shén me chù lái wú yún kàn
舉。 溈山 問 道吾：「甚麼處來。」 吾 云：「看

bìng lái shān yún yǒu jǐ rén bìng wú yún yǒu bìng zhě bú
病來。」山云：「有幾人病。」吾云：「有病者不
bìng zhě shān yún bú bìng zhě mò shì zhì tóu tuó ma wú
病者。」山云：「不病者莫是智頭陀[1]麼。」吾
yún bìng yǔ bú bìng zǒng bù gān tā shì sù dào sù dào shān
云：「病與不病，總不干[2]他事。速道，速道。」山
yún dào dé yě méi jiāo shè
云：「道得也沒交涉。」[3]

[1] 【頭陀】 S:【头陀】 [tóu tuó]: "an itinerant monk." From the Sanskrit "dhūtaguṇa" (धूतगुण), which designates a set of ascetic practices of Buddhism; 智 [zhì]: Daowu's full name was Daowu Yuanzhi (道吾圓智 [dào wú yuán zhì]).

[2] 【不干】 [bù gān]: "to have nothing to do [with something]."

[3] 【沒交涉】 S:【没交涉】 [méi jiāo shè]: "to have no relationship [with something]."

【日】

こ いさん どうご と なん ところ きた
擧す。溈山、道吾に問う、「甚麼の處より來る。」
ご いわ かんびょう きた さんいわ いくにん あ
吾云く、「看病し來る。」山云く、「幾人有って
や ご いわ びょうしゃ ふびょうしゃ あ さん
病む。」吾云く、「病者と不病者と有り。」山
いわ ふびょうしゃ こ ち ずだ な ご
云く、「不病者は是れ智頭陀なること莫しや。」吾
いわ びょう ふびょう そう た じ かかわ すみや
云く、「病と不病と總に他の事に干らず、速かに
い さんいわ い う またもつ うしょう
道え。」山云く、「道い得るも也沒交涉。」

【E】

Guishan asked Daowu: "Where have you come from?" Daowu said, "I come from taking care of the sick." Guishan said, "How many people are sick?" Daowu said, "There are some who are sick and some who are not sick." Guishan said, "The one who is not sick —that is the ascetic Zhi,[1] isn't it?" Daowu said, "Sick or not sick, it has nothing to do with 'that' matter. Say it quickly! Say it quickly!" Guishan said, "Even if I could say it, it would have nothing to do [with 'that.']"

[1] "Zhi": Daowu's full name was Daowu Yuanzhi (道吾圓智 [Dàowú Yuánzhì]).

To be a man of the way is to walk on the sharp edge of a cliff separating the world from no-thing-ness, the great citadel of things from the bottomless chasm, keeping both in sight at all times, choosing neither, embracing both. When a fellow is encountered on this narrow path, both feel compelled to wrestle with one another, playfully, but with their sharpened claws ready to strike, like tiger cubs observed in the mountains, while the onlooker is unable to determine whether he witnesses a game between friends or a combat to the death.

Both standing on the dagger-like edge of the summit of a mountain, reached after an ascent that took them considerable effort and patience, there is death on each side, either a fall on a heap of knives and swords on one side or a fall into a bottomless and dark pit on the other. The fangs are displayed, the claws are out, and one of the tigers attempts to push his opponent on the side of the blades, asking him: "Where have you come from?" To mention an earthly location, with the name it bears in man's world, would be to be impaled on a broad sword, destroying the unicity of the earth and cutting up the sky into neat but illusory pieces, having no reality outside of their world. The adversary for all that knows the game, and he deflects the blow with skill: "I do not busy myself with the trivial matters of the world, the cutting out of the earth and the sky. I am taking care of those who are prisoners of the illusions of the world." Using words to avoid falling into the trap of words, this demands experience and wit, whereas a novice may have stayed silent, afraid of cutting himself with the sharp pieces of metal.

The combat is, however, far from over. Another blow swiftly comes: "How many of those prisoners are there in the world?" Once again, he attempts to throw his enemy onto the daggers that split the body and the mind into pieces, that can be counted and grasped, denying its oneness. To count people is to fail to see that they are one with the sky itself, and that their individuality is merely an illusion of the world. Dodging the claws, but without fleeing away, an answer is given, with the protagonists once again not fearing to use the weapons of the world to escape from its overwhelming presence: "There are some who are prisoners and some who are not." The reality of the world cannot be denied, as is its usefulness. Words are necessary to man. The work of the swords that cut out the heavens is what allows him to perceive the path upon which he walks, and that enables him to embrace the way, becoming neither a stone statue thrown into the abyss nor remaining a prisoner of the world. The world is indeed made of countable people and things, but he treats them like blades without handles, only wielded when necessary, and only seized with the softest grip, so as not to cut himself and bleed to death.

The attack failed, but the battle still continues: "The one who is a free man rather than a prisoner, is that you?" To see an opposition

between the self and the other is to be caught in the illusions of the world. If he answers with a “yes,” he loses. If he answers with a “no,” he is defeated, fallen upon a blade, his body cleaved. The blow is yet once again deflected: “Prisoner or not, it has nothing to do with ‘that’ matter.” Remaining on the edge, he wrestles the opponent and brings him to a lower ground, to the foundation of the world, its cornerstone, the first things that were built in it, that is, the most rudimentary words, those that may represent the totality of all that is, and no-thing-ness itself: “that,” without more details, without description, only a finger pointing to the whole of being. This is how it should be between men of the way. They appear to be engaged in a fierce battle, but they thereby support and guide each other, more securely standing upon the edge by counterbalancing the weight of the other. They may indeed hang over either side with more confidence when they are together, as they know that a force will be there to act as a counterweight to their excesses. They become one mind, one note resonating in the citadel and the chasm, until they all collapse and no-thing remains.

Case 123 —Jiufeng Does Not Acknowledge —九峯不肯

Source: The Book of Serenity Case 96.

【中】

jǔ jiǔ fēng zài shí shuāng zuò shì zhě shuāng qiān huà hòu zhòng
舉。九峯在石霜作侍者。霜遷化後，眾
yù qǐng táng zhōng shǒu zuò jiē xù zhù chí fēng bù kěn nǎi yún dài mǒu jiǎ
欲請堂中首座接續住持，峯不肯乃云：「待某甲
wèn guò ruò huì xiān shī yì rú xiān shī shì fèng suì wèn xiān shī
問過。若會先師意，如先師侍奉。」遂問：「先師
dào xiū qù xiē qù yí niàn wàn nián qù hán huī kū mù qù yì
道：『休去，歇[1] 去，一念萬年去，寒灰枯木去，一
tiáo bái liàn qù qiě dào míng shén me biān shì zuò yún míng
條白練[2] 去。』[3] 且道，明甚麼邊事。」座云：「明
yí sè biān shì fēng yún rèn me zé wèi huì xiān shī yì zài zuò
一色邊事。」峯云：「恁麼則未會先師意在。」座
yún ěr bù kěn wǒ nà zhuāng xiāng lái zuò nǎi fén xiāng yún wǒ
云：「爾不肯我，那裝香來。」座乃焚[4] 香云：「我
ruò bú huì xiān shī yì xiāng yān qī chù tuō qù bù dé yán qì biàn
若不會先師意，香煙起處脫去。」[5] 不得言訖[6] 便
zuò tuō fēng nǎi fǔ qí bèi yún zuò tuō lì wáng zé bù wú xiān shī
坐脫，峯乃撫其背云：「坐脫立亡則不無，先師
yì wèi mèng jiàn zài
意未夢見在。」

[1] 【歇】 [xiē]: “to rest” / “to stop.”

[2] 【練】 S:【练】 [liàn]: “white silk.”

[3] A quote from a poem written by Shishuang Qingzhu (石霜慶諸 [shí shuāng qìng zhū]), “The Seven Completions” (七去). The quote mentions five of them. The complete poem is as follows:「休去，歇去，冷湫湫地去，一念萬年去，寒灰枯木去，古廟香爐去，一條白練去。」 “Ceased completely; vanished completely; have become a tranquil marsh; one thought and ten thousand years have passed; withered trees have turned into vanishing cold ashes; have become a censer in an ancient temple; have turned into a stripe of white silk.”

[4] 【焚】 S:【焚】 [fén]: “to burn.”

[5] 【坐脱】 S:【坐脱】 [zuò tuō]: “to die in a seated posture.” Synonymous with 坐化 [zuò huà].

[6] 【訖】 S:【讫】 [qì]: “finished.”

【日】

舉す。九峰、石霜に在って侍者と作る。霜遷化の後、衆堂中の首座を請して住持を接續せしめんとす。峰肯わず、乃ち云く、「某甲が問過せんを待て、若し先師の意を會せば先師の如くに侍奉せん。」遂に問う、「先師道く、休し去り、歇し去り、一念萬年にし去り、寒灰枯木にし去り、一條白練にし去ると、且く道え甚麼邊の事を明すや。」座云く、「一色邊の事を明す。」峰云く、「恁麼ならば則ち未だ先師の意を會せざるあり。」座云く、「我爾を肯わざるや、香を装い來れ。」座乃ち香を焚いて云く、「我若し先師の意を會せずんば香煙起る處脱し去ることを得じ。」言い訖って便ち坐脱す。峰乃ち其の背を撫して云く、「坐脱立亡は則ち無きにあらず、先師の意は未だ夢にだも見ざるあり。」

【E】

Jiufeng was with Shishuang, serving as his attendant. After Shishuang passed away, the congregation wanted to ask the head monk to succeed him as the abbot of the temple, but Jiufeng would not acknowledge him, saying: "Wait until this monk asks him a question. If he understands the late master's teaching and intention, this one will serve him as he served the late master." So, he asked the head monk: "The late master said: 'ceased completely; vanished completely; one thought and ten thousand years have passed; withered trees have turned into vanishing cold ashes; have turned into a stripe of white silk.'[1] Tell us, upon what matter does the quote shed light?" The head monk said, "It sheds light upon the matter of the oneness of the sensory realm." Jiufeng said, "If so, [the head monk] has yet to understand the master's teaching and intention." The head monk said, "You will not acknowledge me, so bring me some incense." He lit the incense and said, "If I indeed have not understood the late master's teaching and intention, would I [be able to] leave behind [my flesh] while the smoke of this incense rises?" As he had yet to finish speaking, he left [his flesh] behind while sitting [as in meditation]. Jiufeng gently stroked his back and said, "To leave behind one's flesh while in sitting meditation, or to pass away while standing, this is not unheard of, but even in dreams, [the head monk] has not seen the master's teaching and intention."

[1] A quote. See note 3 of the Chinese text.

One can spend a lifetime drowning in a lake of ink and being buried under mountains of paper, attempting to understand the essence of the sky, but all this worldly knowledge may not bring him one step closer to it. Conversely, the simple may merely open up a window and be immediately consumed by the splendid vision offered to his eyes, and the essence of all that is may then appear as clearly as the sunrise after a long and dark night. The blind is, all the same, seldom aware of the true nature of his infirmity. He may be told about the wonders of sight, and believe that his dreams, the fruit of his fertile imagination projected upon

his mind, and the truth of the heavens are one and the same, without any means of disproving his firmly held belief. This is why the task of choosing a leader is always arduous but critical. The blind may indeed lead the blind, and none of them may see the abyss in front of them all.

Even after being offered some guidance, one may, despite this fact, still fail to perceive the essence of the all-encompassing sky, and yet be more aware of the nature of the world than most of its inhabitants. The first step toward freedom from the chains of the world, the opaque walls of the imposing citadel painstakingly built by the hands and the mind of man, is indeed to clearly see them and to gain awareness of one's condition as a prisoner of its ramparts. Before we can see that no-thing-ness is the origin and the foundation of all things, of the world itself, we must first begin to see that the boundaries between the things before our eyes are arbitrarily drawn by our mind, or handed to us through tradition, by those who made these equally arbitrary decisions. Then, cracks may appear. The walls may begin to collapse, and the links of our chains may begin to be fused. This collapse is nonetheless not a mere crumbling or a disappearance. Everything that is remains as it was. These things now simply appear in their truth, as an emerging totality, with the contours fading away, and their unicity slowly being revealed to our astonished eyes. This collapse may continue, slowly engulfing the whole of life, with all living things appearing as a majestic tree whose seed emerged out of the ocean eons ago, with its roots deeply penetrating the earth, and its branches extended high into the heavens. Going further, it is this tree itself that begins to wither, as life collapses into death, becoming one with the earth. This is when the ultimate event occurs, when the earth itself vanishes completely, absorbed by the sky, as it becomes the only thing that remains in front of one's eyes. With only one thing that can be perceived, there is only a single thought on his mind, one that embraces the entirety of the heavens and their work, which is the unfolding of time itself. Without any other thing, the time taken by the blinking of an eye cannot be discerned from the time taken by entire revolutions of our galaxy. Time itself is folded into a single instant, here and now. The totality of the skies can now be beheld. But this does not mean that its essence is truly seen, as one other thing yet remains, standing in the way, one that is not in front of the face but rather behind it.

When the collapse of the world is complete, then there is only oneself, facing the clarity of the heavens in front of him. The last step to unveil the essence of being itself, the primordial foundation of the heavens, is then to let the self collapse into the heavens, letting it cease to appear as the last thing. This is when the veil is lifted, when the blindness ceases, together with the self. Only no-thing-ness then remains, except for the thinnest thread of white silk floating in the air, guided by

the whole carried upon the way. This is the last remnant, the lifeline that will allow man to emerge from no-thing-ness. Forever remaining in it, one would indeed cease to be human and become a mere stone. He would not be able to guide others to such a revelation. Engulfed in perfect equality, having seen the truth of the skies, he is then called to grab the silk thread and pull himself back into the world of differences, the realm of contrast and meaning, the home of most men.[102] Furthermore, he can now see that no-thing-ness is not a realm parallel to the world of man, or even one underlying it. No-thing-ness is the world, and the world is no-thing-ness. They are one and the same, even when one is blind to their shared nature. The flesh may endure or it may perish. It makes no difference, as does the pride puffing up one's mind, but our nature always remains unchanged. We are specks of dust floating in the sky. We are the sky observing the speck of dust that is the earth itself. We are a thing and no-thing, a beating heart, an emerging and fading wave, a string that gathers and keeps at bay, a contradiction beautifully incarnated, running on the path, passing on the torch to a new generation, going no-where, embodying no-thing.

Case 124 —Deshan Came to Guishan —德山到溈山

Source: The Blue Cliff Record Case 4.

【中】

jǔ dé shān dào guī shān xié fù zi yú fǎ táng shàng cóng
舉。德山 到 溈山，挾[1] 複子[2] 於法堂上，從
dōng guò xī cóng xī guò dōng gù shì yún wú wú biàn chū
東過西，從西過東，顧視[3] 云：「無，無。」便出。
xuě dòu zhuó yǔ yún kān pò liǎo yě dé shān zhì mén shǒu què
雪竇 著語云：「勘破了也。」德山 至門首，却
yún yě bù dé cǎo cǎo biàn jù wēi yí zài rù xiāng jiàn guī shān
云：「也不得草草。」便具威儀，[4] 再入相見。溈山
zuò cì dé shān tí qǐ zuò jù yún hé shàng guī shān nǐ qǔ fú
坐次，德山 提起坐具[5] 云：「和尚。」溈山 擬取拂
zi dé shān biàn hè fú xiù ér chū xuě dòu zhuó yǔ yún kān pò
子，德山 便喝，拂袖而出。雪竇 著語云：「勘破

[102]See the commentary of Haku'un Yasutani (安谷白雲) on this case: "When one has a clear view of the inner sameness, then he can use this eye to look at the outer world of difference anew. This is called the 'wisdom of the mysterious observation', the 'wisdom of the later attainment', or 'the Dharma eye'. To realize only the aspect of equality is a kind of enlightenment sickness." Translated by the author.「内面の平等がはっきり見えたら、その眼でさらに表面の差別の世界を再び明確に見なおすのだ。それを妙観察智とも、後得智とも、法眼ともいうのだ。平等の一枚悟りは、一種の悟り病だ。」From: 安谷白雲. 《従容録新装版: 禅の心髄》。東京：春秋社, 2008. Page 517 (Case 96).

liǎo yě dé shān bèi què fǎ táng zhuó cǎo xié biàn xíng guī shān zhì
了也。」德山 背却法堂，著[6] 草鞋便行。 溈山 至
wǎn wèn shǒu zuò shì lái xīn dào zài shén me chù shǒu zuò yún dāng
晚，問首座：「適來[7] 新到在什麼處。」首座云：「當
shí bèi què fǎ táng zhuó cǎo xié chū qù yě guī shān yún cī zì yí
時背却法堂，著草鞋出去也。」 溈山 云：「此子已
hòu xiàng gū fēng dǐng shàng pán jié cǎo ān hē fó mà zǔ qù zài
後，向孤峯頂上，盤結草庵，呵[8] 佛罵祖去在。」[9]
xuě dòu zhuó yǔ yún xuě shàng jiā shuāng
雪竇 著語云：「雪上加霜。」

[1] 【挟】 S:【挟】 [xié]: “to clasp under the arm.”

[2] 【複子】 [fù zi]: “a bundle carried by a monk during a pilgrimage.”

[3] 【顧視】 S:【顾视】 [gù shì]: “to look while turning one’s head.”

[4] 【具威儀】: “to wear formal clothing”; 威儀 (S: 威仪) [wēi yí]: “majestic appearance.”

[5] 【坐具】 [zuò jù]: “a sitting cloth.” Translation of the Sanskrit word “nisīdana” (निसीदन), transliterated as 尼師檀 [ní shī tán] in Chinese.

[6] 【著】 [zhuó]: “to wear.”

[7] 【適來】 S:【适来】 [shì lái]: “just now.” Equivalent to the modern Chinese: 剛才 .

[8] 【呵】 [hē]: “to scold”; 呵佛罵祖 (S: 呵佛骂祖) [hē fú mà zǔ]: “to scold the Buddhas and insult the Patriarchs.”

[9] 【在】 [zài]: Here, it is used as a particle emphasizing the fact that he will be in the place mentioned in the sentence. The Japanese version translates it as the particle ぞ [zo], emphasizing a statement.

【日】

こ とくさん いさん いた ふくす わきば
舉す。 德山、 溈山に 到る。 複子を 挾んて
はっとうじょう ひがし にし わた にし ひがし わた
法堂上を、 東より 西に 過り、 西より 東に 過り、
みわた む む い すなわ いで せっちょうじゃくご
顧視して 無、 無と 云って 便ち 出ず。 雪竇 著語し
いわ かんぱ おわ とくさん もんしゅ いた
て 云く、「 勘破し 了れり。」 德山、 門首に 至り、
かえ いわ ま そうそう よ
却って 云く、「 也た 草草に するは 得からずと。」
すなわ いぎ ととの ふたた はい あいみ いさん すわ
便ち 威儀を 具え、 再び 入って 相見す。 溈山 坐りお
とき とくさん ざぐ ていき いわ おしょう いさん
る 次、 德山、 坐具を 提起して 云く、「 和尚。」 溈山
ふくす と す とくさんすなわ かつ そで はら
拂子を 取らんと 擬。 德山 便ち 喝して、 袖を 拂って
いで せっちょうじゃくご いわ かんぱ おわ とくさん
出ず。 雪竇 著語して 云く、「 勘破し 了れり。」 德山

法堂に背却けて、草鞋を著けて便ち行く。溈山、晩に至って首座に問う、「適來の新到、什麼處にか在る。」首座云く、「當時、法堂を背却け、草鞋を著けて出で去れり。」溈山云く、「此の子、已後孤峰頂上に向いて草庵を盤結え、佛を呵り祖を罵り去らん在。」雪竇著語して云く、「雪の上に霜を加う。」

【E】

Deshan came to Guishan and, carrying his bundle under his arm, he stepped into the Dharma Hall, walking across it from east to west and from west to east, looking around as he said, “Nothing! Nothing!” and then he went out. (Xuedou commented: “Seen through!”) When Deshan got to the main entrance gate, he said, “Still, I can’t be so hasty.” So, he dressed formally and once again entered to meet Guishan. As Guishan was sitting, Deshan held up a sitting cloth and said, “Master!” Guishan was about to take his whisk when Deshan shouted: “Haa!” Then, he gave a flick of his sleeves and went out. (Xuedou commented: “Seen through!”) Turning his back on the Dharma Hall, Deshan put on his straw sandals and departed. That evening, Guishan asked the head monk: “The newcomer who was here a while ago, where is he?” The head monk said, “He soon turned his back on the Dharma Hall, put on his straw sandals, and left.” Guishan said, “One day, this lad will head out to the top of a deserted peak, build a grass hermitage, scolding the buddhas and insulting the patriarchs!” (Xuedou commented: “Piling up frost on top of snow.”)

The day of the great enlightenment may only represent the true beginning of one’s journey on the path. The light clears away the delusions of the world, as the dawn chases away the shadows of the

night, but light may conceal as well as it reveals, and an occultation may also be a source of revelation. The fiery summer sun that illuminates a clearing indeed plunges the forest surrounding it deeper into darkness, and likewise, a total eclipse of the gilded star marking the pace of our days by the ashen luminary of the night allows the contours of its flaming body to be observed with more detail. In the same way, a man who has reached the roof of the world, who has climbed to the very top of the gigantic citadel of things, has let his eyes feast on the plain clarity of the skies. He has perceived the essence of all that is, and seen the emptiness of all things, but he may forget to open himself up to this light, forget to let it be more than a mere instrument of a revelation of what stands before his eyes, whereas he should also let it seep profoundly into his flesh, up to the innermost parts of his bones and the core of his mind, so that the emptiness of his own self may appear, thus showing him that it is an illusion, exposed by this light for what it is. Otherwise, drunk with his newfound power, inebriated by his sight of the essence of the skies, this man may feel emboldened rather than humbled, ready to provoke those dwelling at the foot of the mountain.

Running down to the temple, the man then rudely steps into the meditation hall, walking back and forth, looking around, without paying his respects to the abbot present inside, saying: "No-thing! No-thing!" before simply going out. He confidently announces to all those present that he has entered the door of the not-two. He has stepped into no-thing-ness and now sees that the things of the world are but a pernicious illusion, a mere fantasy of the mind. He makes use of a single word, basing his argument on the gestures of his body, showing that he knows of the vacuity of words, and thus decides to employ what is one of the most down-to-earth forms of expression, one that speaks without words, but also gives ample room for interpretation, leaving its meaning to be in large part constructed by the spectators of this performance. Saying "No-thing!" he may indeed also point out the fact that the meditation hall is indeed empty, with the monks busying themselves with other matters, perhaps a poke thrown at the abbot, who is like a shepherd letting his sheep wander around rather than herding them on the path to their pasture. No one would, even so, be able to prove such an interpretation, leaving the words open.

This entry into the hall was marked by a breaking of good manners, a rebellion against the order established within the world of men, as the man saw the arbitrariness of the order together with the emptiness of the world itself. To reject or oppose this order for all that shows that one is still attached to it and that it still holds sway over one's mind. Freedom implies a release rather than a rejection, without fear or disgust of abiding within this world and of following its order. Realizing this, and wanting to counterbalance his act of rebellion, the man thus put on his

formal garment and once again enters the hall, paying his respects to the abbot, submitting to the order of the world, for a brief instant at least. He indeed continues with his teasing of the master, holding up a sitting cloth and calling upon him: “Master!” The meaning of this is once again left open, and any interpretation reveals as much the nature of the mind of the interpreter as the intention of the actor of this performance. The master, however, sees through his game, seemingly implying a deficiency in the leadership of his flock, and recognizing this arrogant man as one of his own, he reaches for his whisk, his shepherd’s staff, to bring this straying lamb back to the earth, and to the fold. Seeing this, the man then simply lets out a deafening shout: “Haa!”, thereby clearing away the air, shattering all ideas, as a last means of defense, because he has encountered someone unimpressed by his drunkenness on the sweet wine of enlightenment.

Returning to the peak, the man then has yet to take the last step. He stands at the heights, contemplating the foundation of the heavens, but he has lost touch with the earth. He is still attached to his self, and fails to see his own face in the eyes of all those he encounters. When he sees himself and the empty sky in all things, and sees no-thing-ness in every thing, he will then once again descend from his mountain, himself becoming a shepherd for a flock straying from the path. In his drunkenness, he may scold the Buddhas and insult the patriarchs, seeing that these indeed also are empty things of the world, but one day he will see that he is frost piled up upon the snow. The anger will then be turned into impassiveness, and the arrogance will be transformed into benevolence toward all that is. He will be both a man of the world and a dweller of the deserted peak, seeing that they are but two facets of the same thing, which in turn is no-thing.

Case 125 —Tiemo Came to Guishan —鐵磨到溈山

Source: The Blue Cliff Record Case 24.

This case is identical to the Book of Serenity, case 60.

【中】

jǔ liú tiě mó dào guī shān shān yún lǎo zì niú rǔ
舉。劉鐵磨 到 溈山。山 云：「老牸牛，[1] 汝
lái yě mó yún lái rì tái shān dà huì zhāi hé shàng hái qù
來也。」磨 云：「來日臺山[2] 大會齋，和尚還去
ma guī shān fàng shēn wò mó biàn chū qù
麼。」溈山 放身臥，磨 便出去。

[1] 【牸牛】 [zì niú]: “a cow”; 牸 [zì]: “female of domestic animals.”

[2] 【臺山】 [tái shān]: More exactly, Mount Wutai (五台山), which is far away in the northern part of the country, in Shanxi Province.

【日】

舉す。劉鐵磨、溈山に到る。山云く、「老牸牛、汝來たれり。」磨云く、「來日、臺山に大會齋あり、和尚還た去くや。」溈山身を放って臥す。磨便ち出で去る。

【E】

Liu Tiemo[1] came to Guishan. Guishan said, “Old cow, you have come!” Tiemo said, “Tomorrow, there will be a great feast at Taishan. Will you go there, Master?” Guishan lay down and stretched himself out. Tiemo then left.

[1] “Liu Tiemo”: A student of Guishan Lingyou. The name Tiemo means “iron grindstone.”

[2] “Taishan”: See note 2 of the Chinese text.

Compassion is the weapon of the enlightened, while aggression is the weapon of the deluded, the slave to the world and to his ego. When the flesh encounters the iron blade, it is slashed when it resists it, but it may be left unscathed if it perfectly yields to its strength, absorbing the blow and thereby showing the inconspicuous force of softness, the hidden power of flexibility. What yields to all forces nonetheless cannot stand at all, and thus nothing can be built with it, but conversely, what is perfectly rigid, unyielding, is shattered to pieces as soon as it encounters a significant force. To see the nature of the light filling the skies, the essence of being, is to be able to complement and accompany what fate places upon our path. When stumbling upon a rock, he is water, and when thrown into water, he is a rock, becoming an instrument of the way, a source of balance.

When a harsh woman comes to see an old and experienced man of the way, ready to unsheathe her sword, ready to grind the opponent into a fine dust that will be scattered to the winds, forcefully ridding him of

his delusions, she may be suddenly disarmed by a warm embrace, kind words, and a familiarity that betrays unbound compassion: “Old cow, you have come!” The iron woman nonetheless sees the sharp hook hidden in this expression of familiarity. The old facing the young; here versus there; coming versus going, these are pure creations of the world, of the mind of man. They are all on the same earth, under the same sky, all at the foot of the great mountain, whose peak is a wellspring of compassion, poured upon the entire land. She has seen the bait but has not swallowed it. She instead throws it back to where it came from, declaring that she is not so easily fooled and sees through the shrewd words of the old man, all of this disguised as an invitation: “Tomorrow, there is a great feast on the peak of the great mountain of compassion at the other end of the earth, will you go there, master?” There is neither old nor young, neither iron nor flesh, no here and there, and thus time and space, distances and dates, are without the slightest importance. The great mountain is here. Tomorrow’s feast has already begun, and the old man has already eaten his fill. The succulent food of enlightenment in his belly robs him of his strength, and he now yields to the slumber overwhelming his body. He lies down upon the bare soil, letting the great and omnipresent pull of the earth bring him to the face of the planet, in a tender embrace, and he thus stretches out his limbs, ready to rest, as his work has been accomplished.

They both fought without touching each other. They played with one another, both hearing the sound of the heavens resonating throughout the air, recognizing the familiar tune, dancing to it as a celebration of its truth. They will meet again, here and now, as there is nowhere else and no other time when this encounter could occur. One standing on the peak of the mountain, the other at its foot, they both whisper to each other, words of light, offering each other swords as soft as water, and giving each other stones to drink, with one with a smile on his face, and the other with knitted brows, but both incarnating the harmony of the heavens themselves.

Case 126 —Magu Shakes His Ring-Staff —麻谷振錫

Source: The Blue Cliff Record Case 31.

This case is identical to the Book of Serenity, case 16.

【中】

jǔ　　má gǔ　chí xī　　dào　zhāng jìng　　rào chánchuáng sān zā　　zhèn xī
舉。麻谷 持錫[1] 到 章敬，遶禪床三匝，振錫[2]

yí xià zhuó rán ér lì jìng yún shì shì xuě dòu zhuó
一下，卓然[3] 而立。敬 云：「是，是。」雪竇 著
yǔ yún cuò má gǔ yòu dào nán quán rào chánchuáng sān zā zhèn
語云：「錯。」麻谷 又到南泉，遶禪床三匝，振
xī yí xià zhuó rán ér lì quán yún bú shì bú shì xuě dòu
錫一下，卓然而立。泉 云：「不是，不是。」雪竇
zhuó yǔ yún cuò má gǔ dāng shí yún zhāng jìng dào shì hé
著語云：「錯。」麻谷 當時[4] 云：「章敬 道是，和
shàng wèi shén me dào bú shì quán yún zhāng jìng jí shì shì rǔ bú
尚為什麼道不是。」泉 云：「章敬 即是，是汝不
shì cǐ shì fēng lì suǒ zhuǎn zhāngchéng bài huài
是。此是風力所轉，終成敗壞。」

[1] 【錫】 S:【锡】 [xī]: Designates a 錫杖 [xī zhàng]. Literally “a tin stick,” that is, a Buddhist monk’s staff, with metal rings on its top.

[2] 【振錫】 S:【振锡】 [zhèn xī]: “to shake one’s staff and its metal rings.”

[3] 【卓然】 [zhuó rán]: “in an outstanding manner” / “confidently” / “eminently.”

[4] 【當時】 [dāng shí]: The source text had 富時 [fù shí], but it seems erroneous.

【日】

こ まよく しゃく じ しょうけい いた ぜんしょう
舉す。麻谷、錫を持して章敬に到る。禪床を
めぐ みめぐり しゃく ふる ひとたび たくぜん
遶ること三匝、錫を振うこと一下して、卓然とし
た けいいわ ぜ ぜ せっちょうじゃくご
て立つ。敬云く、「是なり、是なり。」雪竇著語し
いわ あやま まよく ま なんせん いた ぜんしょう
て云く、「錯てり。」麻谷、又た南泉に到る。禪床を
めぐ みめぐり しゃく ふる ひとたび たくぜん
遶ること三匝、錫を振うこと一下して、卓然とし
た せんいわ ふ ぜ ふ ぜ せっちょうじゃくご
て立つ。泉云く、「不是、不是。」雪竇著語して
いわ あやま まよく すぐさまいわ しょうけい ぜ
云く、「錯てり。」麻谷、當時云く、「章敬は是な
い おしょう なにゆえ ふ ぜ い せん
りと道えり、和尚は爲什麼にか不是と道う。」泉
いわ しょうけい すなわ ぜ こ なんじ ふ ぜ こ
云く、「章敬は即ち是なり、是れ汝は不是。此れ
こ ふうりき てん ところ つい はいえ な
は是れ風力の轉ずる所、終に敗壞を成すなり。」

【E】

Magu, with his ring-staff[1] in hand, came to Zhangjing. He circled Zhangjing’s meditation seat three times, shook the

ring staff, and stood there, straight and confident. Zhangjing said, "Right! Right!" (Xuedou comments: "Wrong!") Magu then came to Nanquan. He circled Nanquan's meditation seat three times, shook the ring staff, and stood there, straight and confident. Nanquan said, "Not right! Not right!" (Xuedou comments: "Wrong!") Then, Magu said, "Master Zhangjing said: 'Right! Right!' Why does the Master say: 'Not right! Not right!'?" Nanquan said, "In Zhangjing's case, he is right, but you are not right. This thing is just carried by the wind, and in the end, it will be brought to nothing."

[1] "Ring-staff": See note 1 of the Chinese text.

The great revelation of the essence of all things is like an extremely potent medicine. It may overcome the body of the weak, the mind of the feeble, who are not yet ready to wield this power. It may thus become the source of a sickness, stirring up a fire within the mind that echoes throughout the flesh, a high fever that numbs one's reason and blurs one's vision.[103] He is now awakened from the long slumber. The dawn has come, now that he has seen the radiance of the northern star around which the heavens appear to revolve, and brilliance pervades both the world and the sky. Above and below the heavens, he alone is honored.[104] A source of light still cannot see itself. It needs the eyes of others to attest to the intensity of its gleam, to be witnesses of the presence of the heavenly fire within it. The feverish man thus decides to visit his master.

Standing straight, full of confidence, he enters the preaching hall and faces the master, without proper greetings, in what appears to be a defiant behavior. His gaze piercing through the eyes of the bold follower, the master yet sees the nature of the revelation reflected in his eyes. This is why he gives him his seal, approving of his conduct: "Right! Right!" But if the reader thinks that the follower is indeed right, he would be wrong. If he thinks that he is wrong, he would also be wrong, as there is no right and wrong where the light of the great revelation shines, and there is no-thing there.

The feverish man then continues to walk on the path, paying a visit

[103] See: 神保如天. 《従容録通解》。東京：無我山房, 1915. Page 130 (Case 16): 「悟熱の高い麻谷。」

[104] This refers to a sentence that Gautama Buddha proclaimed just after his birth, according to the Buddhist tradition: "Above and below the heavens, I alone am honored." This quote appears in the Dīrgha Āgama, 長阿含經 in Chinese. The sentence in Chinese is as follows: 「天上天下，唯我獨尊」 [tiān shàng tiān xià, wéi wǒ dú zūn].

to another master, in another part of the earth. He performs the exact same play as before, in front of him, but this time he is rewarded with a scolding: "Wrong! Wrong!" If the reader thinks that the follower is wrong, he would be wrong as well. If he thinks that he is right, he would be wrong also. Right and wrong are mere sounds thrown into the air by the two masters. These sounds are not necessarily laden with meaning, originating from the mind of man. They may represent approval and disapproval, but they may also be like the ringing of a bell, a mere signal, an acknowledgment of the performance, of the presence of the visitor, without judging its quality, because the men ringing the bells dwell in a place where there is only sound passing through the air and the ears, and not a single word, nor a single thought.

There are, all the same, times when genuine praise should be given, as a helping hand offered to the lowly, pulling him up toward the heights of the sky, or even as a celebration of the accomplishment of someone who has opened the door that was in front of him since his birth, but whose threshold he until this moment failed to pass. There are other times when the one standing proudly on the peak should be humbled and shown that the depths are, despite this fact, never far away. The awakening is only a new birth rather than an end of the path. The unveiling of the heavens should not render one permanently blind to the things of the world, but rather always invite him to pass from one realm to the other constantly, never abiding anywhere, remaining on the move, without being attached to this movement itself. One may follow the winds or be guided by them, and the onlooker would not be able to discern which force is here at work, but in both cases, the traveler will arrive at his destination, which is the place where all winds are always going. Do you understand? If you do, you are wrong!

Case 127 —Zifu Draws a Circle —資福畫圓

Source: The Blue Cliff Record Case 33.

【中】

jǔ chén cāo shàng shū kàn zī fú fú jiàn lái biàn huà yì yuán
舉。陳操 尚書[1] 看 資福。福 見來，便畫一圓
xiàng cāo yún dì zǐ rèn me lái zǎo shì bù zhuó biàn hé kuàng gèng
相。操 云：「弟子恁麼來，早是不著便，[2] 何況更
huà yì yuán xiàng fú biàn yǎn què fāng zhàng mén xuě dòu yún chén cāo
畫一圓相。」福 便掩却方丈門。雪竇 云：「陳操
zhī jù yì zhī yǎn
只具一隻眼。」[3]

[1] 【尚書】 S:【尚书】 [shàng shū]: "a high-ranking official" / "a government minister."

[2] 【便】 [biàn]: “to be beneficial.”

[3] 【一隻眼】 [yì zhī yǎn]: “an eye” / “excellent observation skills and insight that allow one to see into the essence of things.” (See: 「 物事の本質を見抜くことのできるすぐれた観察力や見識。」From: 山口明穂。《東京：旺文社国語辞典第十一版》。東京：旺文社, 2013.)

【日】

舉す。陳操尚書、資福に看ゆ。福、來たるを見て、便ち一圓相を畫く。操云く、「弟子、恁麼に來たるすら、早是に便を著ざるに、何ぞ況んや更に一圓相を畫くとは。」福、便ち方丈の門を掩却す。雪竇云く、「陳操は只だ一隻眼を具すと。」

【E】

The imperial minister Chencao went to see Zifu. Seeing him coming, Zifu drew a circle. Chencao said, “It was already superfluous for this disciple to come here. Why do you draw a circle in addition to that?” Zifu then closed the door of his room. (Xuedou said, “Chencao has only one eye.”)

To see through the colossal walls of things with which the world of men is built is a peculiar experience, a unique revelation of the wonder lying beyond them, of what is the ground and the essence of all things, including man himself. This is the great desert where there is not a single thing, whose light and heat dissolve the self as soon as it is stepped into, leaving only a fine thread that becomes the lifeline that will help him find his way back, when the need of it is felt, and allow the self to once again emerge from no-thing-ness. The mind may, even so, remain in no-thing-ness while the body still appears to stand in the midst of the world to the eyes of its inhabitants, and thus, the hermit having retreated in emptiness may receive visitors, who live their lives in another realm, still unaware of the essence of all things.

Sitting in ecstasy in his hermitage, the desert mind is brought out of no-thing-ness by the approaching visitor. The hermit then draws a circle in the air with his hand, tracing a line, wielding a sword, cutting out the unicity of the heavens to open up a window toward the world

of men, allowing the things of this world to emerge before his eyes and be examined by his mind. The hermit indeed knows that any ecstasy must be transient, or else the forgetfulness of the self associated with the desert life would turn him into a stone pillar, dead earth, rather than a man. When the opportunity naturally arises, a brief return to the busy streets of the great citadel of things is in order, and it gives meaning to his life in the desert, offering a precious contrast, where each thing can shine in its unadulterated truth. His heart is once again beating vigorously, and he is ready to welcome the visitor with open arms, willing to guide him further on the path, inviting him to join him in the depths of the wasteland, where they will become one with the heavens, before forgetting all things, even themselves.

As soon as the opening of the window is complete, the host is still immediately scolded by his guest: "It was already superfluous for me to leave the place where there is no thing to come here and pay you a visit. Why do you draw a circle in addition to that?" Why depart from the bliss of no-thing-ness, the serenity of the dissolution of the self, to welcome someone in the messy and filthy streets of the citadel of things? One may be free from the blindness of the world and have let the radiance of the heavens pierce through his eyes and nonetheless suffer from a cecity to his own nature, failing to see that compassion is the last step, what should come as a result of the unveiling of the nature of the skies, as to help others is to honor the way itself, and it shows one's harmony with it. To extend a helping hand is indeed superfluous, and yet it is a testament to one's forgetfulness of the self, a sign of humility, acceptance to once again bearing the yoke of the world to relieve others and guide them toward the splendor that shines above, and toward the desert where not a single thing may be found, where emptiness holds sway of the mind and the flesh.[105]

The guest thus has only one eye, the eye turned toward no-thing-ness, toward the power of the self that overcomes the bondage to the world. He is blind in the other eye, the one that should see the necessity of the world and the strength of the one ready to forget himself for the benefit of others, to free the prisoners of the world, as well as to guide back those lost in the disconcerting emptiness of the great desert to the comforting seclusion of the citadel, showing them that both are one and that one cannot reject either of them without losing touch with the way of the sky.

The surest way to lose both eyes and become totally blind is still to play with swords, to wield the sharp instruments that slash what forms a whole, that cut out the seamless drape forming the celestial vault.

[105]See: 吳平。《新譯碧巖集》。台北：三民書局股份有限公司, 2005:「【題解】這則公案表明陳操只有自覺之眼，沒有覺他之眼。因為圓相正是「主客圓融」的大智 (自利) 大悲 (利他) 的象徵。」

One who sees the sky clearly knows that certainty and knowledge do not belong to the realm above. If one continues to think in terms of host and guest, of right and wrong, of enlightened and deluded, desert and citadel, world and no-thing-ness, he is bound to have his eyes split with the sword of reason, veiling the true nature of all that is.[106] One may stand upon the open road under the heavens and still fail to see their radiance, while one who has shut his door and retreated into the walls of his hermitage, sitting with his eyes closed and letting the winds pass through his ears, may, on the contrary, see it perfectly clearly, beholding the entirety of the heavens in the faintest ray slipping through the most minute cracks of his walls. He teaches with silence, and instructs by closing his door, while those standing outside are puzzled, and this puzzling is precisely the gift of the hermit. Concealing himself, he reveals what the self is.

Case 128 —Nanquan's Circle —南泉一圓相

Source: The Blue Cliff Record Case 69.

【中】

jǔ nán quán guī zōng má gǔ tóng qù lǐ bài zhōng guó shī
舉。南泉，歸宗，麻谷，同去禮拜忠國師。
zhì zhōng lù nán quán yú dì shàng huà yī yuán xiàng yún dào dé jí
至中路，南泉於地上畫一圓相[1] 云：「道得[2] 即
qù guī zōng yú yuán xiàngzhōng zuò má gǔ biàn zuò nǚ rén bài quán
去。」歸宗於圓相中坐，麻谷便作女人拜。泉
yún rèn me zé bú qù yě guī zōng yún shì shén me xīn xíng
云：「恁麼則不去也。」歸宗云：「是什麼心行。」
3

[1] 【圓相】 S:【圆相】 [yuán xiàng]: Designates a circle drawn in the air or on a surface as part of a Zen practice. It is often considered to symbolize the unicity of the universe, and its complete, perfect nature.

[2] 【得】 [dé]: "to succeed"/ "to be able" / "to gain [something]."

[3] 【心行】 [xīn xíng]: In a Buddhist context, this word designates a mind that does not tarry on any thought, and always keeps going. (See:「2.佛教語。變動不居之心。心以流行於事相為作用。」From: 《漢語大詞典》。上海辭書出版社, 2024 (Electronic Edition)).

【日】

[106] See Yuanwu's Introduction on this case: "Is this a man of the way, or an ordinary man? If one can pass through this, and begin to know the place into which one falls, then he will know the 'it is so' and 'it is not so' of the ancients." Chinese original:「是道人是常人。若向箇裏透得。始知落處。方知古人恁麼不恁麼。」, From: 《佛果圜悟禪師碧巖錄》。 CBETA (Case 33).

舉す。南泉、歸宗、麻谷、同に去きて忠國師を禮拜せんとす。中路に至り、南泉、地上に一つの圓相を畫いて云く、「道い得ば即ち去かん。」歸宗、圓相の中に坐す。麻谷、便ち女人拜を作す。泉云く、「恁麼ならば則ち去かじ。」歸宗云く、「是れ什麼たる心行ぞ。」

【E】

Nanquan, Guizong, and Magu went together to pay their respects to the National Teacher Zhong. On the way, Nanquan drew a circle[1] on the ground and said, “Say something appropriate, and we will go.” Guizong sat inside the circle. Magu made an informal bow. Nanquan said, “If it is so, then let’s not go [any farther].” Guizong said, “What kind of mind is this, coming and going?!” [2]

[1] “Circle”: See note 1 of the Chinese text.

[2] “Someone’s mind is coming and going”: See note 3 of the Chinese text.

The world is vast and wide, and the young is naturally tempted to explore its diversity. Seeking the way, he goes on a pilgrimage, visiting masters on the four corners of the earth, attentively listening to their teachings, patiently contemplating their rituals, and heartily chanting together with them, under the same sun, under the same moon, no matter where he is. Sooner or later, he nonetheless encounters a man of the way, with a heart overfilled with compassion, ready to appear harsh and cruel for the sake of his brethren and sons. This man will scold the pilgrim, pointing out the fact that his roaming around the earth, his pilgrimage in the different parts of the world, represents a useless effort, a misdirected expression of a yearning for communion with the way of the sky. The way is not to be found in a remote land, and the key to it will not be found in the preaching of a foreign teacher. It is with him at all times, everywhere, and thus he does not even need to take one step to unveil its secret. His strength should not be spent walking over the earth, but rather letting go of the burden of the things still placed over his shoulders, to let the

walls around him crumble, so that the truth of all things may shine in his heart.

The man free from the yoke of the world is not attached to any thing. This also includes attachment to usefulness and to one's progression on the path. If one becomes obsessed with the rejection of pilgrimages, it is no better than to spend his days desperately wandering over the earth in search of an illumination of the heart. The gate always stands in front of us, and if once it is passed there no longer is any opposition between "here" and "there," the other side of the earth is as appropriate as one's hometown to embrace the way of the sky. There is therefore only a fine and blurry line between the deluded pilgrim and the enlightened man guided by the winds of the sky, the wings of the way. To discern which is which may be as tricky as it is futile, but it may also represent a valuable lesson, reminding all those present of where they stand.

A test may thus be used to determine whether a group of pilgrims should continue on their path, to their destination, or whether they should return to where they came from. One of the men then simply draws a circle upon the ground and looks out for a reaction from his companions. The circle is the simplest and most perfect shape, a symbol of completeness, an absence of a beginning or an end, and the infinity of the path upon which men can walk all their lives. It represents the whole of the heavens, the celestial sphere in which the round earth endlessly turns and revolves, without cut, without interruption.

One of the companions then sits inside the circle. He is welcoming the embrace of the heavens, knowing that he is not merely contained by it, but that he is the circle itself, without birth or death, without up or down, right or left. No matter what he does, his walk of life forms a circle, a continuous line folded upon itself, one whose end is its beginning, and where the most distant future is joined with the most distant path, a seamless rope.[107] Being the circle itself, there is nothing else besides it. It is the whole of being, without any opposition between subject and object, between the pilgrim and the rest of the earth. He can sit, because he is already there, where he should be, and there is no other destination where he could be.

Another companion, watching this scene, then simply bows lightly toward the one sitting within the circle. A sign of approval, a mark of respect, without thought, without reflection, but he may as well have bowed toward the sun, toward the earth, or toward any thing of the

[107]See: Yamada, Kou'un, *Hekiganroku (Blue Cliff Record)* [Unpublished manuscript] : "Standing, sitting, eating, talking... each one of these is our circle. You yourself may not realize it, but you're actually drawing a circle the whole day long." Original Japanese: 「立ったら、坐ったり、食べたり、喋ったり…これみんな円相を描いているのです。自分では気がつかないけれども、朝から晩まで円相の丸出し、丸出しです。」 From: 山田耕雲。《碧岩集提唱山田耕雲》。[Unpublished manuscript].

world, as there is not a single thing that does not represent the circle, the way of the sky. There is no right or wrong, simply a manifestation of the harmony between these men and the way itself, which they incarnate rather than study. If it is so, they have no need to go further on their pilgrimage. They, here and now, have honored the master to whom they intended to pay homage. They thus declare that they will not go further, and yet, they continue on their way! Walking upon the circle, there is indeed nowhere else to go. The fact that they intend to complete their pilgrimage or not is of no importance. They may walk on the same path without any destination, reaching the same milestones, with only one difference: the emptiness of their mind, the relinquishing of any desire to perform a precise journey, with a precise intent. Their feet are coming and going, but their mind is perfectly clear, free of all attachment, even attachment to non-attachment itself, and thus they head toward the master, having abandoned any idea of pilgrimage, but who knows what their state of mind will be when they take their next step. Nothing is written. They are always on the move, never abiding anywhere, and thus our own mind should be wary of trying to determine their course, to probe their intent. We should only join them on the path, with the circle before our eyes, the circle formed by the sky, becoming our eye.

Case 129 —The Sudden Encounter with a Tiger —忽逢大蟲

Source: The Blue Cliff Record Case 85.

【中】

jǔ sēng dào tóng fēng ān zhǔ chù biàn wèn zhè lǐ hū féng dà
舉。僧到 桐峯 庵主處，便問：「這裏忽逢大
chóng shí yòu zuò me shēng ān zhǔ biàn zuò hǔ shēng sēng biàn zuò pà shì
蟲[1] 時，又作麼生。」庵主便作虎聲，僧便作怕勢，
ān zhǔ hē hē dà xiào sēng yún zhè lǎo zéi ān zhǔ yún zhēng nài
庵主呵呵大笑。僧云：「這老賊。」庵主云：「爭奈
lǎo sēng hé sēng xiū qù xuě dòu yún shì zé shì liǎng gè è zéi
老僧何。」僧休去。 雪竇 云：「是則是，兩箇惡賊，
zhǐ jiě yǎn ěr tōu líng
只解掩耳偷鈴。」[2]

[1] 【大蟲】S:【大虫】[dà chóng]: "a tiger." This word literally means "a large animal." The character 蟲 at the time designated animals in general, and not only insects, as it generally does in modern Chinese.

[2] 【掩耳偷鈴】S:【掩耳偷铃】[yǎn ěr tōu líng]: This expression literally means "to cover one's ears and steal the bell," an idiomatic expression meaning "to fool oneself and others."

【日】

舉す。僧、桐峰庵主の處に到って便ち問う、「這裏に忽し大虫に逢わん時、又た作麼生。」庵主、便ち虎の聲を作す。僧便ち怕るる勢を作す。庵主、呵呵大笑す。僧云く、「箇の老賊。」庵主云く、「老僧を爭奈何せん。」僧、休し去る。

【E】

A monk came to the hermit Tongfeng, and after a while, he asked: "When someone suddenly faces a tiger here, what shall he do?" The hermit then roared like a tiger, and the monk pretended to be frightened. The hermit laughed loudly. The monk said, "You old robber!" The hermit said, "What will [the visitor] do to this old monk?" The monk then took his leave. (Xuedou said, "They are certainly right, but these two evil robbers only know how to fool themselves and others."[1])

[1] "Know how to fool themselves and others": See note 2 of the Chinese text.

The life of a man of the way is akin to the life of a flea. He inconspicuously leaps over all obstacles, making himself negligible, unnoticed by the great beings of the world. He jumps from earth to world, from world into no-thing-ness and back, never abiding long enough to see himself be attached to anything. He is an insect, as comfortable in the air as he is on or under the earth. He walks over the seas and climbs the skyscrapers built by the hands of man, enjoying the hot gusts of wind sweeping the fields when the summer is at its peak as well as the icy blanket of snow that covers the land during winter. When a trap is laid before him, he simply performs another great leap, to another realm, hiding under the cover of the tall blades of grass.

When he encounters a fellow companion on the path and is presented with an impossible choice, he then knows that the best answer is to be found on the edge separating world and earth, allowing him not to cut himself with the sword of reason. When asked: "When someone suddenly faces a tiger, what shall he do?" He knows that to choose wise words would be to engage in a perilous conversation, as most possible answers

would imply falling into the trap of the play of dualities, wielding the sword of reason to arbitrarily cut out the seamless celestial vault into things of the world, and then expose himself to being wounded by the sharp tongue of the one jousting with him. Brought into the world by the words of this fellow, the realm of ideas, he dodges the snare and attempts to bring the other back to the earth, to the realm of the senses, by simply roaring like a tiger. Sound is opposed to words. Raw imprints upon the senses are used to counteract metaphysical ideas. The roar indeed represents a sign, a warning, laden with meaning, but one that is sufficiently broad and blurry that it cannot be used to accuse the one emitting it of having endorsed a particular idea, one that could be refuted with sharp arguments. The roar disarms the opponent, leaving him unable to slash his enemy. Incapable of thinking of a clever reply, to forcefully bring the lion into the realm of words, the man standing in front of the lion thus simply pretends to be frightened by the beast, acknowledging his own failure, but not seeing it as a defeat, as they both keep playing.

Seeing the frightened expression of his opponent, the lion's roar then turns into a burst of great laughter. He remains in the realm of the senses, the earth and the air, producing only sounds rather than words, things of the world, but still imparting a meaning to this sound, even if it is one largely open to interpretation, vague. Laughter indeed is a mere sound, a thing of the earth, but one that is deeply linked to the world, as it connotes many possible ideas, and represents something more in contrast with the other sounds of nature, such as the whisper of the winds, or the fluttering of a dove's wings. Neither impressive nor shameful, such a display, such a joust between men of the way represents a way of interacting with others while looking out for the dangers that can be encountered on the path. The mountain roads are indeed full of robbers, knife in hand, ready to cut the body into pieces and bring the living to death. To be dispossessed by the robber may nonetheless turn out to be a great revelation. How fortunate the man with none! Naked, penniless, exposed to the sun and the winds, this is when one may realize that he is the sky itself. Robbed of all his words, of the answers that he thinks are due to him, he may reconsider the value of the world itself, of these countless things that merely represent others, and that cut out what is one, caricaturing the perfection of nature to make it more easily grasped by our mind.

When encountering a tiger on the road, one should not be afraid of its open mouth. He should rather throw himself inside it, pressing his neck onto its fangs, letting his own blood fill up his belly, letting himself disappear, departing from life and returning to death, the place where there is not a single thing, knowing that he will then once again rise from the earth, and himself become the tiger that swallows the earth and the

sky in one gulp.

Case 130 —The World-Honored One Points to the Ground —世尊指地

Source: The Book of Serenity Case 4.

【中】

jǔ shì zūn yǔ zhòng xíng cì yī shǒu zhǐ dì yún cǐ chù yí jiàn fàn chà dì shì jiāng yì jīng cǎo chā yú dì shàng yún jiàn Fàn chà yī jìng shì zūn wēi xiào

舉。世尊與眾行次以手指地云：「此處宜[1] 建梵刹。」[2] 帝釋[3] 將一莖草，插於地上云：「建梵刹已竟。」世尊微笑。

[1] 【宜】 [yí]: “proper”/ “appropriate.”

[2] 【梵刹】 S:【梵刹】 [fàn chà]: “a Buddhist temple/monastery.” Transliteration of the Sanskrit word “brahmakṣetra” (ब्रह्मक्षेत्र), meaning “[a place] purified of defiling illusions” / “pure” / “quiet.”

[3] 【帝釋】S:【帝释】 [dì shì]: An abbreviation of 帝釋天 [dì shì tiān], that is, “Śakra” (शक्र), the lord god of the Trāyastriṃśa Heaven, and a protector of Buddhism.

【日】

こ せそん しゅ ゆ つい て もっ ち さ

舉す。世尊衆と行く次で、手を以て地を指し

いわ このところよろ ぼんさつと た ていしゃゆっきょう

て云く、「此處宜しく梵刹を建つべし。」帝釋一莖

そう もっ ちじょう さしはさん いわ ぼんさつと た

草を將て地上に挿で云く、「梵刹を建つること

すで おわ せそん みしょう

已に竟ぬ。」世尊微笑す。

【E】

When the World-Honored One was walking with his followers, he pointed to the ground with his finger and said, “This is a suitable place for building a temple.” Shakra[1] took a stalk of grass, stuck it in the ground, and said, “The temple has been built.” The World-Honored One smiled.

[1] “Shakra”: See note 3 of the Chinese text.

When the mouth of the awakened is opened, it triggers a tempest of words and sounds that engulfs the whole of the heavens, without anyone able to discern them. They are like the wind itself, felt everywhere, able to uproot the most robust and ancient tree, but remaining ungraspable and invisible, without parts, being only an indistinguishable whole. When he points to the ground with his finger, what is the boundary of what he designates? There is none. When he declares: "This is a suitable place for building a temple," his finger supports the whole of the heavens, and it points toward the great mountain that encompasses the entire earth. The fitting place is anywhere, as there is no other place, and there is not a single portion of the earth or the sky that would not be fitting.[108] The finger is a ray of the sun, among countless others, but also the heavens themselves, as a whole, including the earth. It is the sky pointing at itself, like someone observing his own image in a mirror.

One of the followers accompanying the awakened then takes a stalk of grass and sticks it in the ground, saying: "The temple has been built." To perceive this truth, one must take a step back and observe the whole of the heavens. The fiery star appearing to circle around the earth as it floods it with brilliance has indeed been the driving force of life since its inception, and thus the ultimate source of our world. Its blazing rays feed the emerald beings covering the earth, which are relentlessly weaving together soil and water, air and light, to build up their stalks and extend new leaves that will further collect the celestial radiance, inflating the body of life and thereby driving a wedge between earth and sky. How insignificant are the temples built with carved stones by the hands of man compared to those built by life itself! A single blade of grass is indeed a far more intricate and elegant work of art than all the greatest sanctuaries of the world, built to honor the heavenly. Our existence rests entirely upon the work of these emerald beings, and they thus represent the foundation of our world. Life is the supreme celebration of being, but one should, however, not delude oneself and should see that all the things of the world, including the living, are still nothing but an illusion, a cutting out of the whole of nature into arbitrary parts, to which equally arbitrary names are also assigned.

Pointing out the whole, the awakened invites the deluded to turn their gaze away from the things of the world, and its divisions. There is only one place, and there is only holy ground. There is no past or future, no "here" and "there," and this is why he counts among his followers witnessing this scene people who have lived through different eras. This is

[108] See Wansong's preface on this case: "One speck of dust arises, the entire earth is embraced in it." Chinese original: 「一塵纔舉。大地全收。」, From: 《萬松老人評唱天童覺和尚頌古從容庵錄》。 CBETA (Case 4).

why the celestial and the earthly, gods and men, are assembled together, as one being, with no sharp line traced by their gaze to separate the holy from the profane, men from gods, the living from the dead, the world from the sky.[109] The heavens themselves are the monumental temple of being, and the awakened are the flaming altars inside it, revealing its splendor to its dazzled visitors, with their light never reaching its seemingly infinitely distant walls, showing only the magnificence of the harmonious, the greatness of the vast and void expanse in in which there is not a single thing.

Case 131 —Yantou's Bow When Hearing a Haa! —巖頭拜喝

Source: The Book of Serenity Case 22.

【中】

jǔ yán tóu dào dé shān kuà mén biàn wèn shì fán shì
舉。巖頭 到 德山，跨[1] 門便問：「是凡，是
shèng shān biàn hè tóu lǐ bài dòng shān wén yún ruò bú
聖。」山 便喝， 頭 禮拜。洞山 聞云：「若不
shì huò gōng dà nàn chéng dāng tóu yún dòng shān lǎo hàn bù
是豁[2] 公，大難承當。」頭 云：「洞山 老漢不
shí hào wù wǒ dāng shí yì shǒu tái yì shǒu nà
識好惡。我當時一手擡，一手捺。」[3]

[1] 【跨】 [kuà]: "to stride over" / "to straddle"

[2] 【豁】 [huò]: The use of Yantou Quanhuo's original name may be a play of word, as the character can mean "liberal-minded." See also the word 豁達 (S: 豁达) [huò dá], meaning "magnanimous."

[3] 【捺】 S:【捺】 [nà]: "to press down firmly."

【日】

こ がんとう とくさん いた もん またが すなわ
舉す。巖頭、德山に到り、門に跨って便ち
と こぼん しょう さん すなわ かつ とう らい
問う、「是れ凡か聖か。」山、便ち喝す。頭、禮
はい とうざんき いわ も こ かつこう
拜す。洞山聞いて云く、「若し是れ豁公にあらず

[109] See: 神保如天. 《従容録通解》。東京：無我山房, 1915. Page 29 (Case 4): 「此の一側は大小廣狭の二見を破し無限絶對の境界を日常座作進退の上に識得し活用せしめやうとの主意である。」

おお　じょうとう　かた　とういわ　とうざんろう
んば大いに承當し難からん。」頭云く、「洞山老
かん　こうあく　し　わ　そのかみいっしゅたいいっしゅなつ
漢、好惡を識らず。我れ當時一手擡一手捺。」

【E】

Yantou [Quanhuo] came to Deshan. He stood astride the gate and asked: "Is this ordinary? Is this holy?" Deshan then shouted: "Haa!" Yantou made a deep bow. [When he heard about this,] Dongshan said, "Had it not been the magnanimous Quanhuo,[1] one would hardly have accepted [this answer]." [Hearing of this reply,] Yantou said, "Old Dongshan doesn't recognize good from bad. At that time, I raised up with one hand and pushed down with the other."

[1] "Quanhuo": See note 2 of the Chinese text.

The world around us is a series of artificial boundaries traced by our hands and our minds, delimiting where one thing ends and another begins. Each one of these things, the building blocks forming the gigantic citadel in which we spend our lives, is assigned sets of properties defining the place and the role it occupies within it. They bear names and adjectives, like labels defining their nature in relation to other things. So deeply entrenched in our minds are these lines that most dwellers of the world have been led to forget that they have no existence outside of our heads. Even when a gate and a fence separate two territories upon the earth, such separation is meaningless if it is not acknowledged and supported by a mind. Meaning does not belong to the earth or the sky, but rather only intrudes into these realms when they stand out from the world, like words and ideas incarnated as sound-waves in the air or characters etched on the earth.

To embrace the way of the sky is to stand astride all the gates separating the things of the world, opening them, pulling and pushing them, showing that we are the ones deciding to keep these gates as they are or not, to respect the differences between the spaces they delimit. According to the order of the world, one side may be holy and the other profane. One side may belong to me while the other may belong to you. The winds nonetheless pass through them all. The sun's rays do not respect any of these frontiers, only men do so, because they submit themselves to this order into which they were thrown at birth, and that

represents all that they know. And yet, it is the building of the world that allows the revelation of its falsehood, and of the truth of the sky, as no-thing-ness. The contemplation of the illusory division suggested by the presence of the gate is what allows man to overcome this illusion and enter no-thing-ness with an awareness of what it stands in contrast to, before even this last contrast can itself be released and disappear into the great abyss. There is nothing holy or profane outside of the world, but one needs the capacity to discern the holy from the profane to perceive the fact that they are indeed one, and that all is no-thing-ness.

Is this holy? Is this profane? To give an answer therefore is to acknowledge that these are two different things. One may simply point toward the sky, saying: "This is holy! This is profane! This is me! This is you! This is what *is*! This!" This would be to shatter the walls of the world by throwing its foundation stone at it. Another may follow another path, thinking that words are exhausted by this question and that they cannot be used to undermine the realm to which they belong. Shouting with all his breath, stirring up a wave echoing throughout the sky, one may hope to wield the power of the earth and summon the forces of the sky to cause the crumbling of the walls separating things. Is one method better than the other? Is one of the men enlightened and the other deluded? The snake bites its own tail, and a chasm opens up in front of the one who considers these questions. The wise may simply make a deep bow, directed to the only thing that remains in his mind, without raising a single thought, without right and wrong, without rise and fall.

Case 132 —Yangshan's According to My Abilities —仰山隨分

Source: The Book of Serenity Case 77.

【中】

jǔ sēng wèn yǎng shān hé shàng huán shí zì fǒu shān yún suí
舉。僧問仰山：「和尚還識字否。」山云：「隨
fèn sēng nǎi yòu xuán yì zā yún shì shén me zì shān yú dì
分。」[1] 僧乃右旋一匝[2] 云：「是甚麼字。」山於地
shàng shū gè shí zì sēng zuǒ xuán yì zā yún shì shén me zì shān gǎi
上書箇十字。僧左旋一匝云：「是甚麼字。」山改
shí zì zuò wàn zì sēng huò yī yuán xiàng yī liǎng shǒu tuō rú xiū luó
十字作卍[3] 字。僧畫一圓相，以兩手托，[4] 如修羅
zhǎng rì yuè shì yún shì shén me zì shān nǎi huò yuán xiàng wéi què
[5] 掌日月勢云：「是甚麼字。」山乃畫圓相，圍却
wàn zì sēng nǎi zuò lóu zhì shì shān yún rú shì rú shì
卍字。僧乃作樓至[6] 勢。山云：「如是，如是。

rǔ shàn hù chí
汝善護持。」

[1] 【隨分】 S:【随分】 [suí fèn]: “according to one’s abilities.”

[2] 【旋】 [xuàn]: “to turn around [something]” / “to whirl.” Variant of 鏇 [xuàn]; 匝 [zā]: a measure word for “turns” / “circuits.”

[3] 【卍】 [wàn]: The swastika (स्वस्तिक) is an auspicious symbol of ancient Hinduism. In Buddhism, the swastika is one of the “thirty-two signs” of Buddha. It possesses a variety of meanings, including being a symbol of the cyclic nature of the universe, working like a wheel, and linked to the heavenly cycles.

[4] 【托】 [tuō]: “to support” / “to support with one’s palm.”

[5] 【修羅】 S:【修罗】 [xiū luó]: “an Asura” (असुर). A kind of demi-god in Hindu mythology. Here, it refers to one member of the Eight Legions (Sanskrit: अष्टसेना [Aṣṭasenā]; Chinese: 八部衆 [bā bù zhòng]), beings in charge of protecting Buddhism.

[6] 【作樓至勢】 [zuò lóu zhì shì]: “to do the pose of Rucika”; 樓至 (S: 楼至): “rucika.” The last of a thousand Buddhas of the eon known as the “fortunate eon” (“Bhadra-kalpa” भद्रकल्प). He is known for his vigorous protection of Buddhism. A couple of statues representing Rucika can be found at the entrance of many Buddhist temples. The aforementioned pose thus probably is one that expresses the idea of vigor and strength.

【日】

こ そう きょうざん と おしょうかえ じ し
擧す。僧、仰山に問う、「和尚還って字を知る
いな さんいわ ぶん したが そうすなわ う せんいっそう
や否や。」山云く、「分に隨う。」僧乃ち右旋一匝し
いわ こ なん じ さん ちじょう お こ
て云く、「是れ甚麼の字ぞ。」山、地上に於いて箇の
じゅう じ しょ そう さ せんいっそう いわ こ なん
十の字を書す。僧左旋一匝して云く、「是れ甚麼の
じ さん じゅう じ あらた まん じ な そういちえん
字ぞ。」山、十の字を改めて卍の字と作す。僧一圓
そう えが りょうて もっ ささ しゅら じつげつ たなごころ
相を畫いて兩手を以て托げて修羅の日月を掌に
いきおい ごと いわ こ なん じ さん
する勢の如くにして云く、「是れ甚麼の字ぞ。」山
すなわ えんそう えが まん じ いきゃく そうすなわ る し
乃ち圓相を畫いて卍の字を圍却す。僧乃ち樓至の
いきおい な さんいわ にょぜ にょぜ なんじょ ごじ
勢を作す。山云く、「如是如是、汝善く護持せよ。」

【E】

A monk asked Yangshan: “Is the Master literate or not?” Yangshan said, “According to [my] abilities.” The monk then turned around once clockwise and said, “What ideogram is this?” Yangshan drew the ideogram for “ten” (十) [, shaped

like a cross,] on the ground. The monk then turned himself around, once, counterclockwise, and said, "What ideogram is that?" Yangshan turned the "ten" (十) into a swastika (卍).[1] The monk then drew a circle [in the air] and lifted his two hands with his palms upward, like Asura[2] holding the sun and moon, and he said, "What ideogram is that?" Yangshan then drew a circle around the swastika, and the monk struck the pose of Rucika.[3] Yangshan said, "Yes! Yes! Like that! Keep it with care."

[1] "Swastika": See note 3 of the Chinese text.

[2] "Asura": See note 5 of the Chinese text.

[3] "Rucika": See note 6 of the Chinese text.

All that we enjoy upon the earth has been a gift of the heavens, the result of the conjunction of a myriad of factors, the entirety of the flow of the sky since its unfolding, pointing toward the bestowal of this gift to us, as a formidable and yet all too ordinary event bearing the name of fate. If we are able to wield a stylus like a sword to carve up the earth to leave the imprint of our world upon it, it is because we have been raised in this world by our relatives and neighbors. They have introduced us into temples of things, made of words and characters, the work of their ancestors, allowing men to grasp with their hands and minds representations of what is out of their reach without such mediation. To be a master of the world is yet to see how it is intertwined with the earth and the skies. The words we throw into the air, the characters we inscribe upon the ground, they are mere instances of meaningfulness, signification imparted to pieces of earth and sky, but every single thing can bear such signification. Every single thing under the heavens may reveal itself to be a sign, pointing to something else.

Standing upon the ground, turning around and sweeping the horizon with our gaze, we may thus gather to ourselves the ten directions, the entirety of the earth, from north to south, from east to west. We can become a living sign representing this realm, and observing our performance, another man may undertake the task of representing it, as a symbol, as an image, a character already found within the world since a long bygone era, which may be a cross: "+," symbolizing the whole of the earth as two axes of the surface of the planet.

Then turning once again our body around, in the opposite direction, gazing at the celestial vault, as the sun and the moon, the planets and

the stars, perform their ancient, continuous round dance around the heavens, we gather the entirety of the skies to ourselves, embodying the all-encompassing realm with our flesh. Still assessing the nature of our play, the observer may then turn the cross into a swastika, "卍," symbolizing the heavenly wheels, the circular course of the heavenly bodies performed each day before our eyes.

What comes next? What is greater than the all-compassing sky? It is the essence of the heavens themselves, what supports all that *is*. It is what cannot be encompassed, because it is not a thing: no-thing-ness itself, but as soon as one attempts to represent it, one only produces a caricature, a contradiction, a thing that represents what it is not.[110] The alluring illusions of the world may, all the same, play their part in guiding its dwellers toward an experience of the unmediated truth, toward no-thing-ness itself. Falsehood may be wielded in the name of truth, so that falsehood and truth may collapse one into the other, leaving no-thing in their stead, as a vision of the essence of the heavens. We may thus trace a circle around the sky with our fingers, and place our hands to appear as if we supported the sun and the moon with our own strength, symbolizing the foundation of the skies, what is not a thing, the place where no thing can be, but out of which all things arise, and to which they all belong. Watching this, the observer may thus draw a circle around the swastika, a crude and improper but, despite this fact, useful symbol of the place where there is not a single thing, no world or earth, no signifier or signified, no beginning or end.

By seeking to represent the unfathomable, by searching for the great character of the universe,[111] incarnating it with our own body, we may then perceive the interweaving of the world with the foundation of the heavens, see the no-thing-ness in each thing. We may also light up a beacon within the darkness of the world, allowing those who spend their lives in the shadowy depths to catch a glimpse of the radiance of the sky, so that they may decide to undertake the journey upward and climb the high ramparts of the world, and so that they may themselves also experience no-thing-ness, once they have beheld what lies beyond them, and begin to see the same vision in each thing of the world, see that they are but empty shells of translucent glass veiling the heavenly splendor. They may then also realize the flowing nature of all that is, with one thing turning into another, life turned into death and back into life, a character progressively transformed, whose meaning is never rigidly determined, always in the eye of the beholder, fleeting like the heavens themselves.

[110] See Wansong's preface on this case: "It is like a man trying to draw emptiness. The moment he lowers the brush, he makes a mistake." Chinese original: 「如人畫空下筆即錯。」, From: 《萬松老人評唱天童覺和尚頌古從容庵錄》。 CBETA (Case 77).

[111] See: 神保如天. 《從容録通解》。東京：無我山房, 1915. Page 490 (Case 77).

Case 133 —The World-Honored Turns a Flower —世尊拈花

Source: The Gateless Barrier Case 6.

【中】

shì zūn xī zài líng shān huì shàng niān huā shì zhòng shì shí zhòng jiē mò
世尊 昔在靈山會上拈[1] 花示眾，是時眾皆默
rán wéi jiā yè zūn zhě pò yán wēi xiào shì zūn yún wú yǒu
然，惟 迦葉 尊者破顏[2] 微笑。 世尊 云：「吾有
zhèng fǎ yǎn cáng niè pán miào xīn shí xiàng wú xiàng wēi miào fǎ mén bú lì
正法眼藏，涅槃妙心，實相無相，微妙法門，不立
wén zì jiào wài bié zhuàn fù zhǔ mó hē jiā yè
文字，教外別傳，付囑[3] 摩訶[4] 迦葉。」

[1] 【拈】 [niān]: “to grasp with the fingers” / “to fiddle with.”

[2] 【破顏】 S:【破颜】 [pò yán]: “to smile faintly.”

[3] 【付囑】 [fù zhǔ]: “to confer.”

[4] 【摩訶】 S:【摩诃】 [mó hē]: transliteration of the Sanskrit word “mahā” (महा), meaning: “great.”

【日】

こ せそん むかし りょうぜん えじょう あ はな ねん
擧す。世尊、昔、靈山會上に在って、花を拈じ
しゅ しめ こ ときしゅみ もくねん た かしょう
て衆に示す。是の時衆皆な黙然たり。惟だ迦葉
そんじゃ はがん みしょう せそん いわ われ しょうぼうげんぞう
尊者のみ破顔微笑す。世尊云く、「吾に正法眼藏、
ねはんみょうしん じっそう むそう みみょう ほうもん あ ふりゅうもんじ
涅槃妙心、實相無相、微妙の法門有り。不立文字、
きょうげべつでん ま か かしょう ふぞく
教外別傳、摩訶迦葉に付囑す。」

【E】

When the World-Honored One was on Vulture Peak, he turned a flower in his fingers, showing it to his followers. At that time, everybody remained silent. Only the venerable Kashyapa let an inconspicuous smile appear on his face. The world-honored one said, “I have the eye of the true Dharma, the subtle mind of Nirvana, the true form of formlessness, the subtle Dharma-gate. It does not rely on words. It is

another kind of transmission outside of the scriptures, given to Maha-Kashyapa." [1]

[1] "Maha": See note 3 of the Chinese text.

Ascending to the peak of the great mountain while the summer sun pours out its incomparable brilliance upon it, like a vivifying shower of light falling over the earth, slipping through our eyes, revealing magnificent scenery, countless flowers adorning the jade-colored carpet of grass worn by the earth. Their fragrance cannot be seen, and yet it pervades the air, reaching our nostrils, evoking the past moments when a similar impression was left upon our mind, causing us to reminisce, as we let a smile appear on our face, an expression of our pleasure in witnessing the beauty of nature.

These flowers are now wide open, their petals turned toward the fountainhead of heavenly fire, the source of their life, after having spent time and effort to painstakingly extract themselves from the ground and grown tall enough to be reached by the celestial brightness. They will soon wither and return to the ground, while their seeds will be carried by the winds and give birth to their posterity, scattered around the valleys, and perhaps, in time, reaching the other side of the earth, while the heavenly wheels continue their endless revolutions, and man's world is caught in the elegant ballet of the seasons.

Men are also like flowers, one day in bloom, and withering away the next, yet never disappearing completely, but rather becoming the foundation for the growth of a new generation. The same is also true of man's world, of the sum of all his knowledge and creations, as they are passed on, directly, through the work of the senses, rather than through a seed planted on the earth or in a womb. It may be from mouth to ear, in the form of speech, or from hand to eyes, in the form of writing, but how would one transmit his experience of what transcends words and characters? How would one pass on what is not a thing of the world to an heir, a vision of no-thing-ness itself? A way to transcend the world and the earth is to stand upon the edge, gathering them and keeping them at bay, that is, to impart meaning to the earth without making use of words and characters and to speak words that are tightly interwoven with the essence of the earth and the sky.

One may pick up one flower dancing with the blades of grass with his fingers, thereby severing it from the great body of life, cutting it out from its roots. In this flower, it is the whole of life that can be contemplated, including mankind. This flower is the direct descendant of the first spark

of life kindled in the ocean eons ago, when the earth itself was freshly formed by the nimble fingers of the cosmos, just as we are, without a single instant of interruption between the present instant and this event of the remote past of our planet. The substance of this flower nonetheless predates this wondrous event. It originates from the very unfolding of the heavens, just like the substance of our bodies, made of stardust, made of light turned into earth. In this thing, it is the entirety of the cosmos that can be seen, heard, felt, smelled, or tasted. More than this, it is the true form of formlessness that can be experienced through it, if only one's eye is open to it. The subtle mind that extinguishes itself can see the true foundation of nature, having passed through the gate leading outside of man's world, to see the ground supporting it.

When the fingers turn the flower, as if it were caught in the whirlwind stirred up by the revolutions of the celestial wheels, the circle formed by the extended petals then becomes these wheels. The movement of the fingers imparts their force to the flower, the last cog in the machinery of the skies, and it sets up the largest wheels of the heavens in motion. There is no separation between the parts and the whole, and this whole is itself no-thing. Someone among the people assembled on the peak, looking at the turning of the flower, sees the flower for what it is, and an inconspicuous smile appears upon his face, a silent reaction, a sign of his vision, without words or characters, and thus the heir stands out from the throng. The flower that will spread innumerable seeds and give birth to countless descendants pierces through the ground and is recognized from among the blades of grass, touched by the sun itself.

Case 134 —Zhaozhou Examines the Hermits —州勘庵主

Source: The Gateless Barrier Case 11.

【中】

zhào zhōu dào yì ān zhǔ chù wèn yǒu ma yǒu ma zhǔ shù
趙州 到一庵主處問：「有麼，有麼。」[1] 主竪
qǐ quán tóu zhōu yún shuǐ qiǎn bú shì bó chuán chù biàn xíng
起拳頭， 州 云：「水淺，不是泊[2] 舡處。」便行。
yòu dào yì ān zhǔ chù yún yǒu ma yǒu ma zhǔ yì shù qǐ quán tóu
又到一庵主處[3] 云：「有麼，有麼」主亦竪起拳頭，
zhōu yún néng zòng néng duó néng shā néng huó biàn zuò lǐ
州 云：「能縱[4] 能奪，[5] 能殺能活。」便作禮。

[1] 【麼】 [ma]: Here, it is a particle marking a question, equivalent to the modern Chinese: 嗎 (S: 吗).

[2] 【泊】 [bó]: “to anchor”/ “to moor.”

[3] 【又到一庵主處】[yòu dào yì ān zhǔ chù] : Some have interpreted this sentence as meaning that Zhaozhou returned to see the same hermit, but the use of the term “one hermit” (一庵主) for each visit would seem to support the idea that these are two different people. This may nonetheless also be a bait presented to the reader, to see if he will lose himself in vain bickerings concerning different interpretations!

[4] 【縱】 S:【纵】 [zòng]: “to release.”

[5] 【奪】 S:【夺】 [duó]: “to seize” / “to take away forcibly.”

【日】

舉す。趙州、一庵主の處に到って問う、「有りや、有りや。」主、拳頭を竪起す。州云く、「水淺うして是れ舡を泊する處にあらず。」便ち行く。又た一庵主の處に到って云く、「有りや、有りや。」主、亦た拳頭を竪起す。州云く、「能縱能奪、能殺能活。」便ち作禮す。

【E】

Zhaozhou went to a hermitage and asked the hermit living there: “Is there [something]? Is there [something]?” The hermit raised his fist. Zhaozhou replied: “The water is shallow. It is not a suitable place for a ship to stop.” He then left. [Later, Zhaozhou] once again visited a hermit and asked: “Is there [something]? Is there [something]?” The hermit raised his fist. Zhaozhou said, “One knows how to release and how to catch. One knows how to kill and how to give life.” And he then made a deep bow.

When the mind is as clear as the azure summer sky, with all the clouds of the world passing through it silently, without hindrance, the body is like the surface of a lake under it, perfectly still, faithfully reflecting the clear condition reigning in the realm above. Sky and water do not waver, no matter the size or the darkness of the clouds passing through, and the two can hardly be distinguished from one another.

The man of the way, in his bountiful benevolence, his deeply entrenched nature leading him to guide others on the path, is nonetheless like a boatman with a long oar in hand, always inclined to use it to test the depth of the waters through which he passes, ensuring that others are not trapped in the silt, or that the ship's hull would not be pierced by rocks. Encountering a fisherman on a bridge, the boatman asks him: "How deep is the water here?" "About an arm's length," the fisherman replies. The boatman then declares: "The water is shallow. It is not a suitable place for a ship to stop," and he then departs. A little while later, he encounters another fisherman on another bridge and asks him the same question, getting the same answer. He then declares: "A boat may stop here. It may even sink in the depths of these waters, swallowed whole, and no-thing will remain of it." Testing the waters with a stick, or interrogating those standing in it, has no influence upon the water. It continues to run toward the great ocean after having descended from the clouds, without the slightest consideration for shallowness and depth, for clarity or muddiness, for purity or filthiness. It simply advances, no matter what, yielding to all obstacles and yet overcoming them. Likewise, a boat that has been stripped of all its cargo and all the unnecessary equipment carried on its deck does not need deep waters to navigate forward. Without fear or worry, the empty ship does not run aground. It safely reaches the mouth of the river, and then the captain can contemplate the beauty of the encounter between sea and sky, the clear world where nothing else can be seen on the horizon.

Running into someone while walking upon the path, one may also perform such a trial. Simply asking a pilgrim "What is it?" may be enough to let him reveal the nature of his mind. Knowing that the loftier the words, the emptier they are, a man of the way may offer an answer that stands in equilibrium on the edge between earth and world, with silence married with a gesture, an arm raised, carrying a meaning, but one that does not impose itself upon the person to which it is destined. It instead represents a gift, a translucent piece of glass that reflects as much the image of the one holding it as it lets light pass through it, gently diffusing it, only offering a blurry picture, in which the beholder will see what he wants to see. If the man raising his arm is doing so as a reflection of the perfect clarity of his mind, having emptied its contents of all things, he will remain unfazed by any answer that comes in reaction to it, knowing perfectly that it will simply be a reflection of the mind of the one standing before him as much as of his own. Approval or contempt, praise or rebuke, his arm remains as steady as a stone pillar, undisturbed by the fiercest assaults of the heavens. "What is it?" he asked. It is no-thing. It is no-one, and thus there is no answer to give, and no one to whom it could be given. There is only one thing, and it can be found concealed in the fist of these men, one with the arm itself, and with all that surrounds it.

Case 135 —Deshan Carries His Bowl —德山托鉢

Source: The Gateless Barrier Case 13.

This case is similar, but its wording is not identical, compared to the Book of Serenity, case 55.[112]

【中】

dé shān yí rì tuō bō xià táng jiàn xuě fēng wèn zhě lǎo hàn
德山 一日托鉢下堂，見 雪峯 問：「者老漢，
zhōng wèi míng gǔ wèi xiǎng tuō bō xiàng shén chù qù shān biàn huí fāng zhàng
鐘未鳴鼓未響，托鉢向甚處去。」 山 便回方丈。
fēng jǔ sì yán tóu tóu yún dà xiǎo dé shān wèi huì mò hòu
峯 舉似 巖頭， 頭 云：「大，小 德山 未會末後
jù shān wén lìng shì zhě huàn yán tóu lái wèn yuē rǔ bù kěn
句。」 山 聞，令侍者喚 巖頭 來，問曰：「汝不肯
lǎo sēng nà yán tóu mì qǐ qí yì shān nǎi xiū qù míng rì
老僧那。」 巖頭 密啟[1] 其意， 山 乃休去。明日
shēng zuò guǒ yǔ xún cháng bù tóng yán tóu zhì sēng táng qián fǔ zhǎng
陞座，果與尋常不同。[2] 巖頭 至僧堂前，拊掌[3]
dà xiào yún qiě xǐ dé lǎo hàn huì mò hòu jù tā hòu tiān xià rén bú
大笑云：「且喜[4] 得老漢會末後句，他後天下人不
nài yī hé
奈[5] 伊何。[6] 」

[1] 【密啟】 S:【密启】 [mì qǐ]: “to admit [something] indirectly or in secret.”

[2] 【果與尋常不同】 [guǒ yǔ xún cháng bù tóng]: “the outcome was different from what usually [happens]” The phrasing appears to be deliberately ambiguous. It avoids the mention of any use of verbal language, probably to imply that the lesson was a non-verbal one, but without saying it explicitly, letting a fruitful doubt arise.

[3] 【拊掌】 [fǔ zhǎng]: “to clap hands.”

[4] 【且喜】 [qiě xǐ]: “it is fortunate.”

[5] 【不奈】 [bù nài]: “to be unable [to do something]” / “to be helpless.”

[6] 【伊何】 [yī hé]: “to be unable to do anything about [him].” Here 伊 (“him”, Deshan) is a pronoun inserted into the frame 不奈…何; compare 奈何 [nài hé].

【日】

こ とくさん いちじつたくはつ どう くだ せっぽう
舉す。德山、一日托鉢して堂に下る。雪峰に

[112] See Book of Serenity, case 55: 「舉。雪峯在德山作飯頭一日飯遲。德山托鉢至法堂峯云。這老漢鐘未鳴鼓未響。托鉢向甚麼處去山便歸方丈峯舉似巖頭頭云。大小德山不會末後句山聞令侍者喚巖頭問。汝不肯老僧那巖遂啟其意山乃休去至明日陞堂果與尋常不同巖撫掌笑云。且喜老漢會末後句他後天下人不奈伊何。」

「者の老漢、鐘も未だ鳴らず鼓も未だ響かざるに、托鉢して甚れの處に向って去る。」と問われて、山、便ち方丈に回る。峰、巖頭に擧似す。頭云く、「大小の德山、未だ末後の句を會せず。」山、聞いて侍者をして巖頭を喚び來らしめて、問うて云く、「汝、老僧を肯わざるか。」巖頭、密に其の意を啓す。山乃ち休し去る。明日陞座、果して尋常と同じからず。巖頭、僧堂前に至り、掌を拊し、大笑して云く、「且らく喜び得たり老漢末後の句を會せしことを。他後天下の人、伊を奈何ともせず。」

【E】

One day, Deshan went down from the temple hall [to the dining room], holding his bowl. Seeing this, Xuefeng said, “Old man! The bell has not been rung, and the drum has not been beaten. Where are you going with your bowl?” Deshan then went back to his room. Xuefeng told Yantou about this. Yantou said, “The large and the small, Deshan has yet to understand the final word.” Deshan heard of this, and he asked his attendant to invite Yantou to come to him. He said, “You do not approve of this old monk[’s behavior]?” Yantou admitted this indirectly. Deshan then took his leave. The next day, Deshan ascended the rostrum, but his teaching was completely different from what it was usually. When Yantou arrived at the entrance of the temple hall [and saw this], he clapped his hands, laughing, and he said, “Marvelous that the old man understands the final word. After that, no man under the heavens can do anything to him.”

To live an existence in harmony with the way of the sky is to let ourselves be guided by it, impassively observing the signs offered to us and reacting accordingly, without will, without opposition. These signs may be given by the heavens themselves or by the hand of man, as elements of his world. When the temple bell is rung, it may be a sign, calling those within reach of its sound to assemble to share a meal, once the cooks have accomplished their duty and the food is ready to be served. One may, however, listen to other signs of nature, like the growling of one's stomach, pleading for food to the mind and the ears, as the body needs to replenish its strength exhausted after a day of labor, with the plow or with the quill, or the setting sun that marks the end of the day. Seeing the day end, without the bell being rung, one may take his bowl and go to the dining hall, following the sign of nature rather than the sign of the world, thereby creating a new sign sent to the cooks, without a word, making them understand that they are late and that people are waiting for their daily sustenance. This view may, despite this fact, also be mistaken! The meaning of such silent signs is always largely in the eye of the beholder, and one can never be sure of the original intention behind their creation, or even whether there was one or not. There lies the subtle power of the silent signs, which embrace ambiguity, reflecting the essence of nature itself better than any word, without sharp lines, but rather only a seamless marriage of shades and shapes.

If one still lets himself be unnerved by the contrasts between large and small, late or on-time, right or wrong, it implies that one has yet to understand the last word. This last word is the last thing in the world to which one clings. One may spend a lifetime hearing people speak or reading books and yet still not discover it. You search for it, and it flees away. You think that you have found it, and it vanishes in a puff of smoke, leaving no traces behind it. If one attempts to discern a difference, one becomes deaf to this word. It is what is heard when the boundaries between words and syllables have collapsed upon themselves, what is seen when the ink cannot be differentiated from the paper upon which it was spilt.[113] To guide the uninitiated toward it, one may simply use words to sow the seed of the great doubt deep in the heart of man, causing him to lose himself in the search for clarity when presented with an intrinsically ambivalent discourse. Desperately trying to find what cannot be found, to put into words what transcends words, one may indeed soon realize the absurdity of this task, and then release the grip he had upon the world as a whole. The last word can then be any word. It is the one through which we realize the emptiness of all words and things of the world, the doorway through which no-thing-ness is uncovered. Once a

[113]See: Yamada, Kou'un, *Mumonkan (Gateless Gate)* [Unpublished manuscript]: "The last word is that which is spoken without using lips and tongue. It has no meaning. It is nothing."

man has done that, no one under the heavens can do anything to him, as he ceases to be someone, and there is no longer any thing around him. He sees through them all, and when he once again pays attention to these transparent things, it is without attachment, knowing of their illusory and yet incredibly useful nature. He embraces the ambivalent, and rejoices in ambiguity, expressing himself with few words, preferring to embody what he means, and to give meaning to each movement of his body, each expression of his face, becoming a reflection of the sky, like the still waters of a lake under the clear, blue sky, undisturbed by the passing of gigantic woolly clouds above it.

Case 136 —Nanquan Cuts a Cat in Half —南泉斬猫

Source: The Gateless Barrier Case 14.

The wording of this case is different in the Blue Cliff Record, cases 63 and 64, and Book of Serenity, case 9.[114]

【中】

nán quán hé shàng yīn dōng xī táng zhēng māo ér quán nǎi tí qī yún dà
南泉 和尚因東西堂爭猫兒，泉 乃提起云：「大
zhòng dào dé jí jiù dào bù dé jí zhǎn què yě zhòng wú duì quán
眾道得[1] 即救，道不得即斬[2] 却也。」眾無對，泉
suì zhǎn zhī wǎn zhào zhōu wài guī quán jǔ sì zhōu zhōu nǎi
遂斬之。晚，趙州 外歸，泉 舉似州，州 乃
tuō lǚ ān tóu shàng ér chū quán yún zǐ ruò zài jí jiù dé māo
脫履[3] 安頭上而出。泉 云：「子若在，即救得猫
ér
兒。」

[1] 【道得】 [dào dé]: “to succeed in saying something [showing some insight].”

[2] 【斬】 S:【斩】 [zhǎn]: “to behead.”

[3] 【履】 [lǚ]: “a shoe.”

【日】

こ なんせんおしょう とうざい りょうどう みょうじ あらそ
舉す。南泉和尚、東西の兩堂が猫兒を爭うに

[114] See Blue Cliff Record, cases 63 and 64: 「【六三】舉。南泉一日東西兩堂爭猫兒南泉見遂提起云。道得即不斬眾無對泉斬猫兒為兩段。」; 「【六四】舉南泉復舉前話。問趙州州便脫草鞋。於頭上戴出南泉云。子若在。恰救得猫兒。」; and Book of Serenity, case 9: 「舉。南泉一日。東西兩堂爭猫兒南泉見遂提起云。道得即不斬眾無對泉斬却猫兒為兩段泉復舉前話問趙州州便脫草鞋。於頭上戴出泉云。子若在。恰救得猫兒。」

因んで、泉乃ち提起して云く、「大衆、道い得ば即ち救わん、道い得ずんば即ち斬却せん。」衆、對うる無し。泉遂に之を斬る。晩に趙州、外より歸る。泉、州に擧似す。州乃ち履を脱して頭上に安じて出づ。泉云く、「子若し在りしなば、即ち猫兒を救い得たらん。」

【E】

Nanquan saw [the monks of] the eastern and western halls fighting over a cat. He seized the cat and said, “If the members of the congregation succeed in saying something [appropriate], they will save it. Otherwise, it will be cut in half!” No one answered. Nanquan then cut the cat in half. That evening, Zhaozhou came back from the outside, and Nanquan told him about this. Zhaozhou then took off his sandals, placed them on the top of his head, and departed. Nanquan said, “If the disciple had been there, he would have saved the cat.”

It may appear to our eyes that the sun rises from the east and sets in the west each day, but the heavens know neither east nor west, no rising or setting. The sun, at all times, shines upon the earth, as our planet revolves around it, while man is given the impression that he is the center of his world. To open up one’s eye is to see the sun below the horizon, to see the sky from its own point of view, transcending the horizon of man’s world. Men are, even so, prone to form attachments to things as well as to beings. They almost ineluctably form tightly knit groups according to the place they inhabit, to the land in which they were born, or to their belonging to a community of ideas, then seeing other groups as strangers, rivals, or even enemies, kindling strife and conflicts that may lead to bitter fights, with words or with swords, as the results of arbitrary frontiers traced by their minds. The seamless unicity of the heavens and all that they encompass is shattered into a multitude of pieces with the knife of perception, the sword of reason, and man slowly begins to reorder these scattered pieces, replacing the order of nature with the hierarchies of his world, becoming himself slowly

enclosed in the heaps of illusions that he created, becoming blind to the truth of the skies.

Strife between men and communities for all that also arises when they cease to let themselves be carried upon the way of the skies, in the flow of nature, to instead attempt to go against it, to express their own will to reach the place where they want to be rather than where they are destined to go. Possession and attachments represent obstacles on our path. The appearance of these obstacles begins with the identification of things as separate from the rest of nature, and it continues with the bestowal of names. We may grow fond of a wild creature for its beauty or its endearing behavior, domesticating it, bringing it into our household, giving it a name and its own living space. Bonds of love and affection are then patiently woven between the owner and the creature that is owned, rendering them both increasingly dependent upon one another. When someone else witnesses such a relationship, jealousy may arise, fostering enmity and hostility, as greed leads to more greed, attachments lead to more desire, while the things that can be possessed are limited, unlike the unbound covetousness of man. What has been born by the blade shattering the heavens may yet also be mended by it.

Seeing two people violently arguing for the possession of a pet is witnessing a misappropriation of the flow of nature, a going against the way of the sky, the result of a misguided view of their own place within it. Firmly seizing the animal, putting a sharpened blade on its back, one may then put an end to this fight, declaring that he will cut the creature in half if they do not release the animal, release their undue attachment to this living thing, and show that they have understood how they have strayed from the path. What they have done is to upend the order of nature. They are the ones who have cut the body of life itself into pieces, seeing the pet as different from themselves or their brethren, rather than a seamless part of the whole of life, and the whole of the skies. It is as if they put their shoes over their head, an inversion of the order of things, a perversion of their raison d'être. Seeing the crimson blood of the poor creature abundantly spilled on the ground, the fighting men might be remembered of the death that will soon come for each one of them, shown that they are no different from the dead earth that they tread. Their mind is a pointed blade that can kill as effectively as a sharp piece of steel, but unlike such a piece of metal, it can also bring back to life, showing men with words and with silent signs that they are wasting their lives chasing after dangersome illusions, instead of embracing the way itself, which underlies and transcends both life and death, right and wrong, the self and the other.[115] A blade may still be placed upon our own throat without our noticing it. If we lose

[115]See: 吳平。《新譯碧巖集》。台北：三民書局股份有限公司, 2005: 「是金剛王寶劍的一斬，死貓活人的一斬。」

ourselves in the consideration of whether the act of cutting the pet in half occurred or not, is right or wrong, arguing with our brethren like the men fighting over the pet itself, the blade already slashes our flesh, and death is in front of us. Let us therefore release the creature back to the wild. Let us forget ourselves in the place from which all things appeared, letting desire and attachments vanish, becoming one with our brethren, with all living things, with the earth and the sky, by seeing that we are no-thing.

Case 137 —Kashyapa Knocks Down the Temple Pole —迦葉刹竿

Source: The Gateless Barrier Case 22.

【中】

jiā yè yīn ā nán wèn yún shì zūn chuán jīn lán jiā shā wài
迦葉 因 阿難 問云：「世尊 傳金襴袈裟[1] 外，
bié chuán hé wù yè huàn yún ā nán nán yìng nuò
別傳何物。」葉 喚云：「阿難。」難 應：「諾。」
yè yún dào què mén qián chà gān zháo
葉 云：「倒却門前刹竿[2] 著。」

[1]【金襴袈裟】S:【金襴袈裟】[jīn lán jiā shā]: The gold-colored robe of a Buddhist monk.

[2]【刹竿】[chà gān]: The flagpole in front of a Buddhist temple.

【日】

こ かしょうちな あ なん と いわ せそん
舉す。迦葉因みに阿難問うて云く、「世尊、
きんらん けさ つとう ほか べつ なにもの つとう しょう
金襴の袈裟を傳うる外、別に何物をか傳う。」葉、
よ いわ あ なん なん おうだく しょういわ もんぜん
喚んで云く、「阿難」と。難、應諾す。葉云く、「門前の
せっかん とうきゃくゃく
刹竿を倒却著せよ。」

【E】

Ananda asked Kashyapa: “The World-Honored One gave you the gold-brocade robe [symbolizing Dharma succession]. Besides that, what did he give you?” Kashyapa said, “Ananda.” Ananda answered: “Yes.” Kashyapa said, “Now you can knock down the [preacher’s] flagpole at the main entrance.”

Easy it is to pass on a piece of earth to an heir. Whether it is a walking staff, a bowl, or a gilded robe, it goes directly from hand to hand, passing through time as generations succeed one another. One's state of mind, one's spiritual legacy, on the other hand, can take a lifetime to be passed on to a successor. For the embracer of the way, such a state of mind may be revealed through his words as well as his actions, showing whether or not he embodies the way of the sky with all his being. The essence of the skies is nonetheless neither a thing nor an idea, but rather no-thing, without even the slightest trace of any concept of no-thing-ness. To see the sky beyond the veil of the things of the world is to see that there is no-thing to pass on, and therefore one may be momentarily puzzled by such realization. It sows the seed of the great doubt in a man's heart, and he will then ask himself: is there something more? There is no-thing, no more no less. There is only a summer wind sweeping the desert under the blinding radiance of the sun, a crystal-clear mind like a temple made of water, in which nothing can be hidden or stored. The greatest gift that one can give is to give no-thing, letting no-thing-ness pervade the mind of the one open to let it come to him. Then, it cannot be taken from him by anyone, as there is nothing to be taken, but he will be able to share it with others and pass on this intimacy with no-thing-ness to a new generation.

When one is then asked what is passed on to the heir, what is offered as an answer does not really matter. It may be a shout, elegant words, or one's name, but what is important is what the one answering embodies with his whole being. The answer itself is a mere sound-wave propagated throughout the air, but it may reveal itself to be an echo of no-thing-ness, a note arising from emptiness and elevated into the heights of the sky. To the one whose ear is wide open, it resonates with his own being, with the no-thing-ness at the core of his heart, striking a chord deep in his mind, revealing with unmistakable clarity their shared state of mind.[116] When one can answer any question and react to any interaction without a trace of thought, naturally and effortlessly moving his tongue to speak or the rest of his body to act upon the earth, with the essence of the heavens themselves reflected through each one of his actions, then the teaching without teacher has been passed on. The preaching of the old generation can then fade into silence, before the generation of the heirs begins. This preaching is like a fluttering flag hung high upon a pole overlooking the earth, perfectly following the unpredictable whims of the winds, constantly responding to its changes, one with the flow of the heavens, visible from afar by the men of the world, as a sign of the

[116]See: 山本玄峰. 《無門関提唱》。東京：大法輪閣, 1994. : 『「阿難/」「ハイ/」単にこれだけなんですナ。その返事が如々に淡々としてできるようになれば、仏教のすべてはそこに伝わっておるという。それ以外の何物でもない。』

presence and nature of the celestial forces, inviting them to notice and observe it through his movements.

Case 138 —Two Monks Roll Up the Bamboo Screens —二僧卷簾

Source: The Gateless Barrier Case 26.

This case is similar, but its wording is not identical, compared to the Book of Serenity, case 27.[117]

【中】

qīng liáng dà fǎ yǎn yīn sēng zhāi qián shàng cān yǎn yī shǒu zhǐ lián shí
清涼大法眼 因僧齋[1] 前上參，眼以手指簾，時
yǒu èr sēng tóng qù juǎn lián yǎn yuē yì dé yì shī
有二僧同去卷簾，眼曰：「一得，一失。」

[1] 【齋】 [zhāi]: "a vegetarian meal served at a Buddhist monastery."

【日】

こ せいりょう だいほうげん ちな そうさいぜん じょうさん
擧す。清涼の大法眼、因みに僧齋前に上參す。
げん て もっ れん さ とき に そう あ おな
眼、手を以て簾を指す。時に二僧有り、同じく
さ れん ま げんいわ いっとくいっしつ
去って簾を巻く。眼曰く、「一得一失。」

【E】

Just before the monks took their meal, Fayan of Qingliang monastery was about to address the congregation. Fayan pointed to the bamboo screen. At this moment, two monks went together to roll it up. Fayan said, "One gain, one loss."

The versatility of man's fingers is a key to his incredible capacity to build upon a world that stands out from the rest of the earth and life. It is a tool allowing him to fashion the earth according to his will, but also

[117] See Book of Serenity, case 27: 「擧。法眼以手指簾時有二僧。同去捲簾眼云。一得一失。」

to create other tools, considerably extending his sway over land and sea, as well as allowing him to reign over the tree of life as a whole. Fingers yet represent more than this: they form one of the foundation stones of his world itself. They are at the root of language, as a finger can be used to point out other things found upon the earth to bring attention to them, becoming a signifier designating a signified. The finger stands upon the edge between earth and world, between meaningless tangibility and meaningful arbitrariness. It represents a faithful image of the marriage of the realms of nature, embodying the ambivalence of the way of the sky, as it shows without explicitly explaining or even clearly determining what is shown. It represents the subtle wisdom of the man of the way, who wields the sword of reason but all the same, refrains from cutting out the whole of nature, only pointing out with it. The meaning of the finger is always rather clear, as one simply has to observe what is to be found in the direction toward which it points, but the intention of the one pointing the thing out is always in great part veiled in obscurity, with the onlooker determining the boundary separating what is pointed at from the rest of the earth and the sky.

If a man of authority sitting down inside a building were to point his index finger at a window through which the bright summer sun was to shine, flooding the room with heat and light while blinding those inside it, those at his service would then naturally interpret this as a command for them to close the drapes and dim this overwhelming torrent of brilliance poured down from the heavens. They may, despite this fact, be mistaken. The finger may have pointed at the moon high in the sky or to a bird whose melodious song was reaching the ears of those present inside. Without further indication, without either a sign of approval or of rebuke following the closing of the drapes, there is no way to know whether they did what was expected of them or not. But if the man of authority embodies the way of the sky itself, his intent may have been to teach them about such subtlety, about the ever-ambivalent essence of the world, with certainty and absoluteness being absent from their minds. He may have been pointing out the foundation of their reason, the edge between earth and world, rather than any particular thing found on the earth or in the sky, teaching them without uttering a word, causing them to doubt their own capacity to interpret signs, shaking up the very foundation of their world and leading them to question the role it occupies in their life.

With one finger, one may thus reveal the essence of the sky, and with one finger, one may cause the heavenly radiance to be concealed, bringing darkness where light holds sway. Every revelation, however, comes with an occultation. When the sun brightly shines upon the world, it casts long shadows and further obscures what is found in it. Conversely, every veiling comes with an enlightenment, like when our star retreats under

the face of the earth, allowing the gentle twinkling of the more distant celestial bodies to illuminate the night and finally be seen by our eyes, after having been outshone during the day. Every gain comes with a loss, and every loss with a gain. Both are inextricably linked to one another, and it is useless to try to separate or count them. When the way of the sky is perceived, one no longer feels compelled to try to determine what is gained or lost, who gains and who loses, as the line separating them is created within our skull, an arbitrary frontier that does not reflect the continuous nature of the celestial vault.

Case 139 —The Tipping of the Water Bottle —趯倒淨瓶

Source: The Gateless Barrier Case 40.

【中】

guī shān hé shàng shī zài bǎi zhàng huì zhōngchōng diǎn zuò bǎi zhàng
溈山 和尚始在 百丈 會中充[1] 典座[2] ， 百丈
jiāng xuǎn dà guī zhǔ rén nǎi qǐng tóng shǒu zuò duì zhòng xià yǔ chū gé
將選 大溈 主人，乃請同首座，對眾下語[3] ，出格[4]
zhě kě wǎng bǎi zhàng suì niān jìng píng zhì dì shàng shè wèn yún bù
者可往。 百丈 遂拈淨瓶，置地上，設問[5] 云：「不
dé huàn zuò jìng píng rǔ huàn zuò shén me shǒu zuò nǎi yún bù kě huàn zuò
得喚作淨瓶，汝喚作甚麼。」首座乃云：「不可喚作
mù tú yě bǎi zhàng què wèn yú shān shān nǎi tì dǎo jìng
木橖[6] 也。」 百丈 却問於 山。 山 乃趯[7] 倒淨
píng ér qù bǎi zhàng xiào yún dì yī zuò shū què shān zǐ yě yīn
瓶而去。 百丈 笑云：「第一座輸却 山 子也。」因
mìng zhī wèi kāi shān
命[8] 之為開山。[9]

[1] 【充】 [chōng]: “to assume [a work position]” / “to fulfill [a duty].”

[2] 【典座】 [diǎn zuò]: “a monastery cook.”

[3] 【下語】 S:【下语】 [xià yǔ]: “to make a declaration.”

[4] 【出格】 [chū gé]: “to show oneself to be extremely qualified.”

[5] 【設問】 S:【设问】 [shè wèn]: “to ask a question” / “to lay out a problem and ask for an answer.”

[6] 【木橖】 [mù tú]: “a wooden stick” / “a wooden shoe.” The second character is quite rare, and the exact nature of the object is not clear. (See: 「木橖：即木樁、木棒、木棍、木履」 From: 釋聖定。《禪宗無門關譯注》。台北：佛光, 1995. Page 161.)

[7] 【趯】 [tì]: “to kick.” Similar to 踢 [tī].

[8] 【命】 [mìng]: “to order” / “to command” / “to assign [someone to a position].”

[9] 【開山】 S:【开山】 [kāi shān]: It literally means “to open a mountain,” but here means “to open a monastery.”

【日】

舉す。溈山和尚、始め百丈の會中に在って典座に充たる。百丈將に大溈の主人を選ばんとす。乃ち請じて首座と同じく衆に對して下語せしめ、出格の者往く可しと。百丈遂に淨瓶を拈じて、地上に置いて 問 を 設けて 云く、「 喚んで 淨瓶と 作すことを得ず、汝喚んで甚麼とか作さん。」首座乃ち云く、「喚んで木楔と作す可からず。」百丈却って山に問う。山乃ち淨瓶を趯倒して去る。百丈笑って云く、「第一座、山子に輸却せらる」と。因って之に命じて開山と爲す。

【E】

[At the time,] Master Guishan lived in Baizhang’s congregation, as a cook. Baizhang intended to choose someone who would be in charge of the Great Gui Mountain [monastery]. He called the head monk and the rest of the congregation, telling them that the one who would show himself to be the most qualified by answering a question appropriately would [be appointed] and go there. Baizhang then picked up a water vase, placed it on the ground, and asked: “Without calling it a ‘bottle’, what would you call it?” The head monk said, “No one can call it a wooden shoe.” Baizhang asked Guishan for an answer. Guishan then tipped the bottle over with one of his feet and left. Baizhang laughed and said, “the head monk has lost to the mountain lad!” Because of this, Guishan was given charge of the new monastery.

It takes intelligence to master the use of words and characters. It takes wisdom to appropriate the use of silence, but only one who is able to walk on the thin frontier between the two can claim to lead others toward an unveiling of their own true face. How does one speak with his mouth closed, or remain silent while a flow of words runs out of his throat? One can speak while silence reigns over the earth and the sky by becoming a living word, with each muscle in his body becoming a character with which meaning can be expressed, without ascending into the cloudy heights of the world, without unnecessary reflection and pondering. A finger may then support the heavens or crush the entire earth. An inconspicuous smile may reveal an ocean of subtle wisdom, indicating that one's eye is open and pierces through all things, to see what is no-thing. One can also remain silent as his tongue pours out a flow of words, by letting it be guided by the way itself, rather than by his own will, emitting sounds rather than speech, even when they will be heard and recognized as such by his audience. With an empty heart, one may speak volumes without saying a single word, without letting meaning be restricted, determined, or defined, becoming simply an instrument of something greater than himself, becoming the voice of the heavens themselves.

A master may thus submit his followers to a trial of their ability to walk the edge between earth and world, asking them to call an object without using its name, such as a water jug placed upon the ground. One who is still a prisoner of the world, a slave of words and characters, may be puzzled by the incongruity of the question. What else shall he call it? His mind only thinks in terms of words and concepts, and he thus cannot fathom why one would not use its name to designate it. If one calls it a wooden shoe or a spoon, it perturbs the order of the world, based on an agreement on the meaning of arbitrary sequences of sounds or characters. This is yet precisely the point: to strike a blow at the foundation of this world, to see if there is any free man among his followers, someone whose mind would see without the use of words, and see the pernicious and illusory nature of the world itself, made of these countless words and concepts.

One whose eye is wide open and sees the light originating from beyond the walls of the world will, even so, know what is expected of him, naturally, without thinking. He sees the ambiguity of the words of the master, the blurriness of the things of the world. To "call" can indeed mean to awaken or to attract one's attention as well as to utter a name. His heart pervaded by no-thing-ness, his life having crossed the boundary separating it from death, he no longer separates the living from the dead, the object from the subject, the person from the thing, and he thus calls

upon the jug as if it were one of his brethren sitting in meditation, pushing on his shoulder to bring him back to the world to attend to some pressing matter. He kicks the jug and spills its contents upon the ground, revealing the emptiness forming its essence,[118] which is also the essence of all that is. The task of a master is to awaken the sleeping prisoners of the world, causing the myriad of thoughts cluttering their minds to be spilled over the ground or evaporated into the air. When the disciple has shown that he can walk on the edge without stumbling, he is now ready to call others. But this may be a daunting task, one that will consume all his days until his last breath, and he may perhaps have been tricked by the old master, naturally answering his question, without reflection, and thereby accepting to succeed him and to carry his burden, but the worthy heir will not mind, because he has released his mind, having forgotten the difference between the weight of a feather and that of an anvil, and he therefore impassively continues to let himself be guided by the way itself.

Case 140 —Xiangyan's Man in the Tree — 香嚴上樹

Source: The Gateless Barrier Case 5.

【中】

xiāng yán hé shàng yún rú rén shàng shù kǒu xián shù zhī shǒu bù pān zhī jiǎo bú tà shù shù xià yǒu rén wèn xī lái yì bú duì jí wéi tā suǒ wèn ruò duì yòu sàng shēn shī mìng zhèng rèn me shí zuò me shēng duì

香嚴和尚云：「如人上樹，口銜[1]樹枝，手不攀[2]枝，脚不踏樹，樹下有人問西來意[3]，不對即違[4]他所問；若對，又喪身失命。正恁麼時，作麼生對。」

[1] 【銜】 S:【衔】 [xián]: "to hold in the mouth."

[2] 【攀】 [pān]: "to climb" (by pulling oneself up).

[3] 【西來意】 [xī lái yì]: "the meaning of the coming from the West [of Bodhidharma]."

[4] 【違】 S:【违】 [wéi]: "to disobey" / "to violate" / "to go against."

【日】

[118] Cf. this sentence from Laozi's Dao De Jing: "One shapes clay into a vessel, but it is in the empty space formed by the vessel that it finds its usefulness." Original Chinese: 「埏埴以為器，當其無，有器之用。」 From: 阿部吉雄。《新釈漢文大系〈7〉老子荘子上巻》。東京：明治書院, 1966. Page 28 (Chapter 11).

舉す。香嚴和尚云く、「人の樹に上るが如し。口は樹枝を啣み、手は枝を攀じず、脚は樹を踏まず。樹下に人有って西來意を問わんに、對えずんば即ち他の所問に違く、若し對うれば又た喪身失命せん。正恁麼の時、作麼生か對えん。」

【E】

Xiangyan said, "[One is] like a man in a tree, holding on a branch with his teeth, without his hands grasping any branch, his feet not resting on the tree, and under the tree, a man asks him about the meaning of the coming from the West.[1] If he does not answer, he is rude to the man who asked him, but if he does answer, he falls and loses his life. When facing such a predicament, what should one do?"

[1] "The meaning of the coming from the West": See note 3 of the Chinese text.

When one opens one's mouth to answer the questions of the newcomer on the path, he condemns himself to fall into the snare of the world, finding himself bound by long chains of words, themselves securely tied to others. These words necessarily represent a betrayal of the truth of the way that they are meant to describe, as this truth is precisely what goes beyond words, what is not a thing and cannot be unfolded within the confines of the world. As soon as the word "way" is heard, one should close up his ears, and then what it means may perhaps be heard. When the term "awakened" is inscribed on stone or paper, one should close up his eyes, and then what it designates may perhaps allow itself to be seen. Why not keep silent then? To remain silent would be to lack compassion, to remain insensitive to the plea of the newcomer, who is just as we were not so long ago, in need of guidance, in need of a helping hand to find the way. Like speech, silence can also only be transient. One is bound to sooner or later be compelled to speak, and no matter when it comes, man is sure to fall. Such a fall may nonetheless not be worse than standing upon the path.

The man who sees the path clearly therefore has no-thing on his mind. He simply follows it, accompanying the flow carried upon the way

of the sky. He is not troubled as he faces certain death by falling into the pit of the world, and he does not hold on to his life when danger arises, for he knows that the line between life and death is an illusion, a pure thing of the world. His heart overwhelmed with love for the whole of being, not distinguishing the totality from the parts, he lets go of his grip upon his own self and lets his flesh fall into the abyss, but not without first offering a helping hand, guiding the slumbering men of the world toward an awakening to the nature of the way, to the essence shared by all that *is*. He takes others into his fall, who themselves offer their hand to other people, all forming a chain descending into the bottomless abyss.

As he falls, the compassionate can then realize that his sacrifice comes with a reward. Letting go of the last thing that prevented him from stumbling into the abyss, releasing the hands offered to others, he finally experiences absolute freedom, the absence of all attachments, as there is nothing to stop his fall, nothing that he could grab onto. There is not only no fear of death or desire to live, there is also no up or down, no east or west, no earth or sky, only no-thing. The fall becomes a dissolution, and there is nothing left that could fall, and nowhere where it could fall. This is when the insight comes: there is the answer to the great question, the only question. The answer comes when the question itself has been forgotten, and this answer is not even pondered, nor is it the subject of any comment.

Case 141 —A Non-Follower Asks the Buddha —外道問佛

Source: The Gateless Barrier Case 32.

【中】

shì zūn yīn wài dào wèn bú wèn yǒu yán bú wèn wú yán shì zūn
世尊因外道問:「不問有言，不問無言。」世尊
jù zuò wài dào zàn tàn yún shì zūn dà cí dà bēi kāi wǒ mí yún
據[1] 座，外道贊歎云：「世尊大慈大悲，開我迷雲，
lìng wǒ dé rù nǒi jù lǐ ér qù ā nán xún wèn fó wài dào
令我得入。」乃具禮[2] 而去。阿難尋問佛：「外道
yǒu hé suǒ zhèng zàn tàn ér qù shì zūn yún rú shì liáng mǎ
有何所證[3] ，贊歎而去。」世尊云：「如世良馬，
jiàn biān yīng ér xíng
見鞭[4] 影而行。」

[1] 【據】 S:【据】 [jù]: “to occupy.”

[2] 【具禮】 [jù lǐ]: “to act according to the rules of politeness” / “to follow etiquette.”

[3] 【證】 S:【证】 [zhèng]: “to attest” / “to prove”/ “to confirm.”

[4] 【鞭影】 [biān yǐng]: “the shadow of a whip.”

【日】

舉す。世尊、因みに外道問う、「有言を問わず、無言を問わず。」世尊據座す。外道讃歎して云く、「世尊は大慈大悲にして、我が迷雲を開き、我をして得入せしめたまう」と。乃ち禮を具して去る。阿難尋いで佛に問う、「外道は何の所證有ってか讃歎して去る。」世尊云く、「世の良馬の鞭影を見て行くが如し。」

【E】

A non-follower asked the World-Honored One: “I do not ask [for an answer] using words, and I do not ask [for an answer] without using words.” The World-Honored One remained in his sitting position. The non-follower gave praise, saying: “The great compassion of the World-Honored One has cleared away the delusions clouding my mind, and allowed me to be granted access.” He then saluted and took his leave. Ananda then sought the World-Honored One to ask him: “What [insight] did you acknowledge, for him to give such praise and then take his leave?” The World-Honored One replied: “Like a good horse, just seeing the shadow of the whip is enough to make him gallop.”

The way of the sky is the course taken by all that is. It can be resisted by the will of man. It can be embraced and enthusiastically followed, but neither things nor men can stand outside of it. They may be unaware of its presence or ignorant of its nature, but they are ineluctably carried upon it by the flow of the skies, the turning of the celestial wheels. If one thinks that those not walking the same path as him on the earth are not carried by the same sky, he is merely blind to both where he stands

and where are the others whom he is quick to judge. Sometimes, it is by standing far away from a path that one can enjoy the most limpid view of it. The foreigner, with his eyes unacquainted with our land and our culture, may see our homeland more clearly than us, who have grown too accustomed to its particularities. When a foreigner seeking to embrace the way of the sky encounters someone awakened to the essence of all that is, he is unburdened by the customs of the land, the hierarchies of this part of the world, and considerations for his own position. He frankly asks for everything he desires, for the core of this land's wisdom, with few words and no restraint: "What is the answer to the question, neither answering with words nor with silence?" Both know that there is only one question to be asked, and only one answer. To put the question into words is to soil its pristine perfection. To answer with silence is to lack compassion and let others stray from the path. What is needed is a sign.

When the sun shines everywhere, a shadow may become clearer than the star itself, as its contour reveals something more than an ocean of light. It is through the sight of contrasts that meaning can be perceived. It is through difference that understanding arises. But how would one perceive what transcends contrasts, and how would one understand what goes beyond all differences? To be granted access to the place where there is no shadow or light, no inside or outside, no follower or stranger, is to see through all contrasts and differences. It is to look at one's impassive face and to see the essence of all things in it, the deepest abyss and the vastest heavens in the reflection of one's eyes. It is to discern the infinite void of the cosmos in an open mouth, and to contemplate the greatness of the earth in one's faintest smile. Each hair is a sequoia tree, each tear a gigantic lake, and each wrinkle a mountain range, with all of them seen as being a single face, his own, which is also an image of no-thing-ness itself. The sign may take any form. It may be a slight reshaping of the flow of light flooding the sky, the transformation of the image one gives of himself. It may be a sound thrown into the air and entering the ears of those standing nearby, or it may be the gentle touch of a hand upon one's shoulder. Its nature is by itself meaningless. The only meaning it possesses is to be a signal calling the one receiving it to go ahead and throw himself into this new realm that he discovers, but which always had been right in front of him. The myriad things of the world then disappear. The millions of things cluttering the mind crumble to dust. The clouds of delusions are scattered by the wind stirred up by the guide, the man of the way. Because of his unbound compassion, he denied the visitor both words of illusions and the silence of indifference. He offered him an experience felt upon the earth, with his flesh, rather than a fantasy of the world built with words and characters, thereby guiding him on the edge between earth and world, letting himself be cut by its sharpness, until no-thing remains of him, and he can see everything

in nothing, the nothing in every thing.

Part IV

The Fall of the Earth

When intense showers of rain carry the heat of the earth to the cold depths of the ocean, and the cloak of leaves clothing the forests is given an amber hue, the ineluctable decline of the reign of life upon the face of our planet becomes apparent. With the arrival of the fall, many creatures of the sky take flight to escape the cold tide that slowly approaches, engulfing the living and leaving many imprudent beings dead. The emerald carpet covering the earth grows more and more patchy, with fields turning into vast arrays of muddy puddles in which the remnants of the harvested crops are slowly decomposing. What appears to be an enfeeblement of life is for all that a time of learning for the sons of men, one during which they are invited to become more familiar with the earth itself, the ground of the world and the substance of their very flesh.

As the days grow shorter, man's gaze slowly turns away from the ethereal heights of the world, and from the brightness of the heavens. Shielding his clothes from the torrential rains pouring from anthracite clouds, his eyes stare at the roads of his world. There, he sees leaves, once nascent jewels of the spring, the splendid ornaments of the trees, now lying down in pieces in the mud, trampled by hordes of beasts and men, without the slightest regard for their incomparable sacrifice for the endurance of life as a whole. These leaves that turned the solar radiance into fruits and seeds are now devoid of any sign of life, ignored, being patiently devoured by the soil out of which they sprouted. Their sacrifice is yet not in vain, and even in death, they may offer something to those who carry on the fire of life through another year.

As most dwellers of the great citadel only see the products of the hands of man around them, obnubilated by their functions, the uses they can have of them, they have grown oblivious to the truth of their substance, to the majestic body of the earth out of which they were shaped, like the countless objects occupying the stage of their lives. Some among those roaming this maze of stone, wood, and glass have still remained in close contact with the substance of the earth, this massive globe that tirelessly keeps their world and their bodies on its rocky face. They point toward the leaves littering the soil of their gardens, inviting all men to contemplate the amazing work of the fall, to listen to the subtle teaching of this season. The fire of life that burned within these leaves has now been extinguished, but their earthly essence now shines for all eyes to see. As they are turned to mud, one may realize that they never ceased to be mere earth. Seizing a sharp iron blade and slashing his arm open, the teacher of the masses of the citadel lets his blood flow onto the earth, soaking the decomposing leaves, as a reminder that we are likewise bound to be devoured by the ground, and that we also are mere bags of earth walking on the rest of the earth. Thrown onto the ground, the jug is rendered useless, and then, as its function disappears, its earthly nature can be revealed, in the contours of its broken pieces. The teacher

thus brings the slaves of the world back to the naked earth, forcing them to face the omnipresence of this substance forming the body of life and the foundations of man's world, with all things shown to share a common nature. The living thus fall down to the earth, wholeheartedly embracing the source and the destination of life, thankful for the knowledge offered to them by the turning of the heavenly wheels, immensely grateful for the efforts of the teachers who brought them closer to the earth, closer to themselves.

Case 142 —Sitting for a Long Time Makes One Tired —坐久成勞

Source: The Blue Cliff Record Case 17.

【中】

jǔ sēng wèn xiāng lín rú hé shì zǔ shī xī lái yì lín yún zuò jiǔ chéng láo

舉。僧問香林：「如何是祖師西來意[1]。」林云：「坐久成勞。」

[1] 【西來意】 [xī lái yì]: "the meaning of the coming from the West [of Bodhidharma]."

【日】

こ そうこうりん とい いか こ そし せい らい い りんいわ ざきゅうろう

舉す。僧香林に問ふ、「如何なるか是れ祖師西來意。」林云く、「坐久成勞。」

【E】

A monk asked Xianglin: "What is the meaning of the Patriarch's coming from the West?"[1] Xianglin said, "Sitting for a long time makes one tired."

[1] "The meaning of the Patriarch's coming from the West": See note 1 of the Chinese text.

The sun rises from the east and then profusely illuminates our land all day long, before setting in the west, allowing our weary eyes to rest

and the earth to cool down. Who can say why it is so? It would be pointless to answer this question, as it just reflects the state of the flow of the heavens. It is as it is. A man who is one with the way of the sky is like a celestial body, whose course is set by the totality of the heavenly mechanism, the flow of the skies. Like a leaf burnt by the sun that falls during the autumn and is carried away by the fresh winds, such a man lets himself be guided by the signs of the heavens or the earth, going east when the flow brings him there naturally, and coming back when the time has come. There is no reason that could be discovered to explain this, because the absence of reason is precisely what best represents the way of the sky itself. It is a clear azure sky, the still surface of a pond, with the breeze only disturbing it enough for the faintest distinction between the two realms to be revealed.

To perceive the essence of the sky, to understand why the sun rises from the east and sets in the west, one may begin to grow closer to the earth, the substance of the planet upon which he is born and which forms the flesh, the blood, and the bones of the body through which he experiences it. The substance of the earth is indeed, among all the things encompassed by the heavens, the one that is most intimately experienced. The omnipresent downward pull of the earth at all times keeps us close to its surface, providing a secure foundation upon which our world is built. Our very body evolved and was shaped in response to it, with our bones made to resist this pull and allow us to stand, to distance ourselves from the surface of the dry land and enjoy the fluidity of the air. To see beyond the boundaries of the body, man must first understand its nature, and see how earth, life, and the sky share the same essence, becoming aware of the fact that he is the earth and the sky themselves. Neither standing erect, that is, only in contact with the earth with the sole of his feet while his eyes are turned toward the stars, nor lying down with his skin in contact with the ground while embracing the gigantic body of the planet, the sitting man embodies the idea of a being who gathers earth and sky, who is one with the way, transcending the boundaries between all realms of nature.

When one sits cross-legged upon the ground, his torso points toward the sky while his legs are parallel to the surface of the earth. Watching straight ahead, onto the horizon, the eyes contemplate the line separating the realm above from the one below, with the body of life slightly blurring this line, and with forests extended in the former and rooted in the latter. Sitting still in such a position, one may begin to feel the passing of time becoming less noticeable, as if the heavenly wheels themselves retreated into darkness. The body then grows increasingly numb, and one may begin to feel one's mind detached from the body, as if it were melting away to become one with the rest of the earth. As the flow of thoughts passing through the mind is dimmed by the numbing of the senses, the

meditating mind may now become more and more oblivious to his own world, releasing the grip he exerted upon all things. Mind and body internally collapse,[119] and this is when the essence may begin to appear, when one has sat for so long that his bones begin to be ground to dust by the heavenly wheels.[120]

Sitting alone is nevertheless useless by itself, if one is not inclined to rid himself of the chains binding his body to the illusions of the world. Sitting then simply wears out the body, and a lifetime may be spent in vain, as if one were attempting to create a mirror by polishing a ceramic tile.[121] One will indeed not become a man of the way by simply sitting and waiting for a revelation to come to him, but rather only become a tired old man, having to answer the naive questions of others without himself knowing any answer, or even clearly understanding the question. The lesson of the sitting man can nonetheless also be learned by one who simply stands, walks, or lies down. The subtle wisdom is not a posture but rather a state of mind, a relationship with the whole of nature, where one embraces the way of the sky, forgetting about the past and the future, being oblivious to the condition of the body, simply experiencing the wonder of presence, the bliss of being, letting the body return to the earth in the blinking of an eye, a lifetime carried on the way, without fear, as there is no more death than there is life, as an autumn leaf reclaimed by the ground, that will become the substance of the leaves of the next spring, once again illuminated by the heavenly radiance.

Case 143 —Senior Monk Ding Asks Linji —定上座問臨濟

Source: The Blue Cliff Record Case 32.

【中】

jǔ dìng shàng zuò wèn lín jì rú hé shì fó fǎ dà yì jì
舉。定上座問臨濟：「如何是佛法大意。」濟
xià chánchuáng qín zhù yū yì zhǎng biàn tuō kāi dìng zhù lì
下禪床[1]，擒[2]住，與一掌，便托開。定佇立[3]

[119] Cf. the "Zen-phrase": 「身心脱落」.

[120] See: Villalba, Dokusho. *Hekiganroku. Crónicas del Acantilado Azul.* Miraguano Ediciones. 1994. Page 76: "Mantente firme y siéntate en zazen hasta que se te desintegren los huesos."

[121] Cf. the famous dialogue found in the "Records of the Zen Master Mazu Daoyi" concerning this metaphor (「磨瓦成鏡」):「唐開元中。習定於衡嶽傳法院。遇讓和尚。知是法器。問曰。大德坐禪圖什麼。師曰。圖作佛。讓乃取一磚。於彼菴前磨。師曰。磨磚作麼。讓曰。磨作鏡。師曰。磨磚豈得成鏡。讓曰。磨磚既不成鏡。坐禪豈得成佛耶。」From: 《江西馬祖道一禪師語錄》。 CBETA .

bàng sēng yún dìng shàng zuò hé bù lǐ bài dìng fāng lǐ bài hū
。傍僧云：「定上座何不禮拜。」定方禮拜，忽
rán dà wù
然大悟。

[1] 【禪床】 S:【禅床】 [chán chuáng]: “a meditation seat.”

[2] 【擒】 [qín]: “to grab.”

[3] 【佇立】 S:【伫立】 [zhù lì]: “to stand for a long time.”

【日】

こ じょうざ りんざい と いか こ
擧す。定上座、臨濟に問う、「如何なるか是れ
ぶっぽう たいい ざい ぜんしょう くだ ひっつか ひらてうち
仏法の大意。」濟、禪床を下り、擒住んで一掌を
あた すなわ つきはな じょう ちょりつ かたわら そういわ じょう
與え便ち托開す。定、佇立す。傍の僧云く、「定
じょうざ な らいはい じょう らいはい あた
上坐、何ぞ禮拜せざる。」定、禮拜するに方って、
はた たいご
忽然と大悟す。

【E】

A senior monk named Ding asked Linji: “What is the fundamental meaning of Buddhism?” Linji came down from his seat, grabbed him firmly, gave him a slap, and pushed him away. Ding just stood there, stunned. A monk standing nearby said, “Why doesn’t the senior monk Ding make a deep bow?” Ding then made a deep bow and suddenly was greatly enlightened.

Man is the highest branch of the tree of life, unceasingly yearning to touch the sky, relentlessly building up his world with material objects and ethereal concepts, so that he may finally be able to sever his dependency on the earth that gave birth to him. A life in the clouds rejoices his heart, stimulating his mind as his imagination runs wild and he sees his thoughts turned into things of the world, given names, rarely concerned by the fact that these things are often pure fantasies, fruit of his mind, without ground or roots in the earth. He yet at times seeks the deeper meaning of his existence, the essence of being itself, the fundamental

truth of nature, but unable to contemplate the raw beauty of the skies, veiled by the profusion of things that he frantically hoards around him, he hopes to find it amid his cluttered world, in the midst of his ideas.

Seeing that someone is lost in the clouds of the world, the man who knows that men are both earth and sky woven into flesh will, all the same, extend a helpful hand into the heights, and then forcefully and brutally pull him back to the ground, so that he will become aware that the tangible realm of the senses may be a better teacher of the way of the sky than the misty peaks built by the minds of his ancestors. When the clouded mind utters metaphysical blabber, the one whose feet are firmly anchored into the ground grabs him firmly by the shoulders and gives him a vigorous slap on the face, before pushing him away, robbing him of his tongue, leaving him stunned. Lost in the cloudy summits of ideation, language, and imagination, he is suddenly brought back to the ground, to sensation, touch and pain, the foundation stones of man's world, direct contact with the tangible reality of the earth. This is where the fundamental essence of nature is to be experienced, rather than reflected upon. This is where the answer to the only question is to be found, imprinted upon his cheek, like the jade seal of the son of the heavens leaving a crimson trace on a pearly white sheet of paper. He is not meant to topple the world or reject it. He is not destined to abandon the legacy of his forefathers, as it is this world that allows him to gain awareness of the fundamental essence, but he is called to appropriate the earth as more than an environment, a background of his world. He is invited to delve into the soil, to cherish the contact of the skin with all things, seeing himself in each one of them, feeling this shared essence that he can experience directly with the senses, more intimately and faithfully than through speech and writing. He will then be able to valiantly wield the sword that separates heaven from earth and cast it away into the bottomless chasm, so that the great collapse can finally occur. The heavens themselves will brutally crash unto the earth, leaving only no-thing in their stead, with no-thing understood, but everything perfectly clear, including the compassion of the one who brought him back to the earth, with his violence finally perceived as the love of a grandmother for her descendants.

Case 144 —The Ten Thousand Things and I Form One Single Body —萬物與我一體

Source: The Blue Cliff Record Case 40.

The wording is slightly different from that in the Book of Serenity, case 91.[122]

[122]See Book of Serenity, case 91: 「舉。南泉因。陸亘大夫云。肇法師也甚奇特。解道。

【中】

jǔ lù gèn dà fū yǔ nán quán yǔ huà cì lù yún zhào
舉。陸亘 大夫[1] ,與南泉 語話次。陸 云:「肇
fǎ shī dào tiān dì yǔ wǒ tóng gēn wàn wù yǔ wǒ yì tǐ yě shèn
法師道:『天地與我同根，萬物與我一體』，[2] 也甚
qí guài nán quán zhǐ tíng qián huā zhào dà fū yún shí rén jiàn cǐ yì
奇怪。」南泉 指庭前花，召大夫云:「時人見此一
zhū huā rú mèng xiāng sì
株花，如夢相似。」

[1] 【大夫】 [dà fū]: “a high-ranking official” (Pronounced [dài fū] in Taiwan).

[2] A quote from the “Treatise on the Unnamable Nirvana” (涅槃無名論) by the Later Qin dynasty Buddhist philosopher Seng Zhao (僧肇).

【日】

こ りくこう たいふ なんせん ごわ とき りくいわ じょう
擧す。陸亘大夫、南泉と語話せし次、陸云く、「肇
ほうし い てんち われ どうこん ばんぶつ われ いったい
法師道く、天地は我と同根、萬物は我と一體と。
ま はなは きかい なんせん ていぜん はな さ
也た甚だ奇怪なり。」南泉、庭前の花を指して、
たいふ め いわ こ いっちゅう はな み
大夫を召して云く、「此の一株の花を見ること、
ゆめ ごと に
夢の如くに相似たり。」

【E】

One time, as Minister Lugen was talking with Nanquan, Lugen said, “Dharma-teacher Zhao said: ‘Heaven and earth and I have the same root; the ten thousand things and I form one single body.’[1] How marvelous!” Nanquan pointed at a flower at the front of the garden, called to Lugen, and said, “The men of our time see this flower as if in a dream.”

[1] “Heaven and earth and I have the same root; the ten thousand things and I form one single body”: A quote. See note 2 of the Chinese text.

When a man has spent his entire life dreaming, he cannot fathom what reality represents. His consciousness numbed by the

天地同根萬物一體泉指庭前牡丹云。大夫時人見此一株花。如夢相似。」

long slumbering, he is convinced that the fruit of his imagination, the products of his fantasies, are as tangible as the rocky ground whereon he lies down and sleeps. The one dreaming that he lives the life of a butterfly each night may, after a while, cease to discern the line separating dream from reality, and he may wonder whether he is not a butterfly dreaming that it is a man.[123] The world of man, the sum of all the things present in his mind, through the lens of which he perceives his surroundings, is like a land of dreams, a caricature of the truth of the earth and the sky, one that can be grasped by his reason, unlike the seamless totality of nature. Having grown from babe to man in such a slumbering state, lulled by the sweet melodies of the world, protected by the ramparts formed by the myriad of things found in it, he is oblivious to the difference between earth and world. Indeed, although these two realms are one, in the sense that they both share the same essence, no-thing-ness itself, the subtle wisdom of the way, despite this fact, allows a slight and yet important difference to be distinguished. The thing of the world, the sign, and what it represents on the earth or in the sky differ from one another. The finger pointing at the moon is not the moon itself, even though they both represent parts of the totality of the heavens, only separated into different things by the sword of reason, within man's world itself, within his mind. To gain awareness of such a subtle difference, one must be guided, out of the lofty world and onto the bare earth, with the tongue or with a finger.

The man of the world only understands what is found in the world. When he is presented with the idea that the heavens, the earth, and he have the same root, and that the ten thousand things forming his world form one single body, he is intrigued, and his interest is suddenly kindled. Is the boundary between the ten thousand things a mere creation of his mind, a shattering of the unicity of the heavens? What a marvelous idea for him! This is, however, only a first step, as this knowledge remains a pure ideation, a thing of the world itself, expressed with words.

The idea must now be released, and become the seed of an experience, a direct contact with what it represents. The finger is then pointed at a flower, impassively collecting the waning celestial brilliance among the fallen leaves of an autumn landscape, accompanied by words lamenting the fact that the men of this time see such a flower as if it were in a dream. The man sees the flowers, the trees, the clouds, and the sky, but he is blind to their nature. He perceives them as things, but not as what they truly are, outside of the ramparts of things forming his world: the great body of nature, the vast earth and the empty sky,

[123] Cf. the famous story in which Zhuangzi dreams that he is a butterfly, and begins to fail to discern whether he is not a butterfly dreaming that it is Zhuangzi (「莊周夢蝶」):「者莊周夢為胡蝶，栩栩然胡蝶也，自喻適志與！不知周也。俄然覺，則蘧蘧然周也。不知周之夢為胡蝶與，胡蝶之夢為周與？周與胡蝶，則必有分矣。此之謂物化。顯示整段。」 From: 《莊子・齊物論》。 (CTEXT).

which all sprout from the same root, the place where there is not a single thing. He not only resembles the flower, but he is the flower.[124] He is the tree, the cloud, and the sky, as these are the same thing, which is in fact no-thing.

Even when the earth and the sky are experienced in their essence, through the work of the senses rather than the work of reason, the woes of the slumbering state, despite this fact, continue to threaten the man who has discovered the way of the sky. He indeed may then be tempted to highlight the contrast between world and earth, between the representation and what it represents, but this would be to once again be allured by the realm of dreams, as such a distinction, while useful to progress on the path up to a certain point, can later reveal itself to be a stumbling block, a hindrance impeding a further advance. The ten thousand things form one body, and the world, the mind, is also one with the earth and the sky.[125] The boundary between them is also an illusion, and the man of the way must always remain alert, in a state of permanent vigil, avoiding letting himself be conquered by his sleepiness and imprisoned in the land of dreams, and yet also refraining from seeing the dream as separate from reality, as they also are fundamentally one, sharing the same essence as all that is.[126]

Case 145 —Close to Falling Prey to Delusions —洎不迷己

Source: The Blue Cliff Record Case 46.

【中】

jǔ jìng qīng wèn sēng mén wài shì shén me shēng sēng yún yǔ
舉。鏡清問僧：「門外是什麼聲。」僧云：「雨
dī shēng qīng yún zhòng shēng diān dǎo mí jì zhú wù sēng
滴聲。」清云：「眾生顛倒[1]，迷己逐物。」僧
yún hé shàng zuò me shēng qīng yún jì bù mí jì sēng
云：「和尚作麼生。」清云：「洎不迷己[2]。」僧
yún jì bù mí jì yì zhǐ rú hé qīng yún chū shēn yóu kě
云：「洎不迷己，意旨如何。」清云：「出身猶可
yì tuō tǐ dào yīng nán
易，脫體[3]道應難。」

[124]See: Yamada, Kou'un, *Hekiganroku (Blue Cliff Record)* [Unpublished manuscript]: "As long as you think, 'I am here and the flower is there', the flower's reality cannot be understood." Original Japanese: 「自分がこちらにあって花が向こうにあって、自分が花を見ていると思っている限りにおいては花の実相は解りません。」 From: 山田耕雲。《碧岩集提唱山田耕雲》。[Unpublished manuscript].

[125]Cf. the "Zen-phrases":「万物一体」, and 「心境一如」.

[126]See: 神保如天. 《従容録通解》。東京：無我山房, 1915. Page 561 (Case 91):「覚夢一如、虚実待対…」

[1] 【顛倒】 S:【颠倒】 [diān dǎo]: “to turn upside down” / “to be deranged” / “crazy.”

[2] 【洎不迷己】 [jì bù mí jǐ]: “to encourage oneself, so as not to lose oneself in delusions” (See: 吳平。《新譯碧巖集》。台北：三民書局股份有限公司, 2005: 「洎不迷己: 砥礪自我，不使本心迷失。洎，浸潤；浸泡。」)

[3] 【脱體】 S:【脱体】 [tuō tǐ]: “to leave one’s body [behind].”

【日】

舉す。鏡清、僧に問う、「門外是れ什麼の聲ぞ。」僧云く、「雨滴の聲。」清云く、「衆生は顛倒して、己を迷い物を逐う。」僧云く、「和尚は作麼生。」清云く、「洎じて己を迷わず。」僧云く、「洎じて己を迷わざるの意旨如何。」清云く、「出身は猶お易かるべきも、脱體に道うは應に難かるべし。」

【E】

Jingqing asked a monk: “What is that sound outside?” The monk said, “The sound of raindrops.” Jingqing said, “Living beings live in an upside-down world, deluded by their pursuit of material things.” The monk said, “What about you, Master?” Jingqing said, “I was close to falling prey to such delusions, but I did not.” The monk said, “What does the Master mean: ‘I was close to falling prey to such delusions, but I did not’?” Jingqing said, “To break out [of the world of delusions] may be easy, but to leave the substance behind to express [the essence] is something difficult to attain.”

As soon as a line is traced between the self and the other, the inside and the outside, one is already caught in the mire of the world.[127] But as illusory as it may be, such distinction is a tremendously powerful means, granting man the opportunity to appear to stand out from the

[127] See: Villalba, Dokusho. *Hekiganroku. Crónicas del Acantilado Azul.* Miraguano Ediciones. 1994. Page 202: “Le pone una trampa. Esta trampa es «fuera».”

rest of nature, from the earth and the sky, with him able to contemplate some aspects of nature from the point of view of a platform of his own making, a world made of things that can elevate him and offer him a broader view of the whole of being, if only he succeeds in using this world for this purpose, rather than simply becoming a slave of the things composing it. The dweller of the world is in ec-stasy from the earth, standing out from it, while his feet remain more or less firmly on the ground. His observation platform is made of the creations of his mind, ready to crumble at the slightest commotion, the most insignificant trial, but it gives him a view from a higher ground, from the inside of his self, which allows him to watch the outside as an object, and see what other animals cannot see in their environment. Leaping on and off this platform, from the world to the earth and back again, this is how he can escape the entrapment experienced by the inhabitant of the world and the obliviousness of the dweller of the earth, joining the realms by incarnating their contrast as well as their shared essence, becoming a melodious note that echoes throughout the air, calling all the living to assemble and follow him on the way of the sky.

Turning one's ears toward the outside, one will hear whatever is already found underneath the surface of one's mind. The continuous flow poured into these ears contains the entire contents of the skies, presented to our mind, which will make of it what it wishes. It may hear the winds sweeping the amber leaves covering the soil, or it may listen to the gentle splashing of raindrops striking the tiles on the roof of our home, or the footsteps of those treading on the muddy path leading to it. But all of these are mere things of the world, pieces of nature carved by the mind. This mind chases after things of the earth like raindrops, but it overlooks the earth itself, which the world is made to reveal. The world is thus upside-down, the opposite of what it should be. It should be a tool for the discovery of the essence of the earth, but it rather becomes a veil that covers it, while offering a distorted representation of it, without this role being perceived, thereby entrapping the deluded slaves to the world.

Before the true value of the world can shine in the eyes of men, they nonetheless must first be able to break through its walls made of delusions. Such a task is relatively easy for someone who is determined to liberate himself. The earth that he seeks can be found at every footstep, at every glance, and he simply lets go of the things through which he is used to seeing it, and plunges himself into a direct, sensory experience of the tangible reality that not only surrounds him, but also represents the essence of his own being.

When the world is appropriated as a tool, and is not merely a force subjugating man while concealing the earth from his eyes, it then can become a source of enlightenment, not only for the self but for others, as that revelation also comes with the knowledge of the illusory nature of the

frontier between the two. This second task is considerably trickier, as it demands a capacity to express the essence of the earth in the heart of the world, without falling into the trap he warns others about. Meticulously choosing his words and often paying great attention to the avoidance of uttering any words, even the wisest possible ones, he attentively but naturally expresses himself with his flesh, becoming what he wants to show the world and not simply telling them about it. *It* becomes what is heard on the outside as well as what echoes on the inside, breaking the barriers with his shout or his fingertip, and then the sounds from the outside are perceived anew. Rain ceases to be heard, the footsteps fade away, and all that is heard is the melody of being itself, the note struck at the inception of the universe, echoing throughout the deepest heavens. The world then falls into place, close to the earth, perfectly intertwined with it.

Case 146 —The Six Can't Perceive It —六不收

Source: The Blue Cliff Record Case 47.

【中】

jǔ sēng wèn yún mén rú hé shì fǎ shēn mén yún liù bù shōu
舉。僧問雲門:「如何是法身[1]。」門云:「六[2]不收。」

[1]【法身】[fǎ shēn]: "the Dharma body." Translation of the Sanskrit word "dharmakāya" (धर्म काय). One of the "three bodies" of a Buddha in Mahāyāna Buddhism. It may be seen as the essence of the whole of nature.

[2]【六】[liù]: "the six." Here, it seems to designate the "six roots" (六根), that is, the six senses of the Buddhist tradition: the eyes, the ears, the nose, the tongue, the touch-sensitive body parts, and consciousness, or perhaps the phenomena perceived by these senses, called the "six dusts" (六塵). The phrasing seems deliberately ambiguous, to allow other interpretations, or perhaps represents bait for the reader, to see if he would submit to the temptation of over-interpreting such detail.

【日】

こ そう うんもん と いか こ ほっ しん もんいわ ろくおさ
舉す。僧、雲門に問う、「如何なるか是れ法身。」門云く、「六収まらず。」

【E】

A monk asked Yunmen: "What is the Dharma-body[1] ?" Yunmen said, "The six can't perceive it."

[1] "Dharma-body": See note 1 of the Chinese text.

[2] "The six": See note 2 of the Chinese text.

The fundamental essence of being is the great body of the heavens, including all that is perceived by the senses.[128] It can be named a body because, like a living creature, it forms a whole whose nature cannot be fathomed when one only considers its parts. Cut into pieces by the knife of perception and the sword of reason, it becomes an empty shell, a dead thing, something other than what it was when it was whole. This whole can, even so, not pass through the doors to our perception. One cannot squeeze a mountain range into a glass vial, and thus, any attempt to perceive the great body of the heavens is condemned to fail. It is so close and so far. We are this body, and so is every single thing that we experience. We have known it intimately since the very day of our birth onto the naked earth, but it for all that keeps escaping us. We attempt to grab it, but it constantly flees away. Since the essence cannot be grasped, we must therefore allow it to approach us and pervade us. It can be found within ourselves as much as outside our self, as we are the great body of the heavens, whose essence is without parts, but only an indivisible totality.

If the heavens cannot pass through the six gates of our mind, an experience of the celestial essence thus implies that the mind itself must be freed from the prison built around these gates. The mind cannot receive it, and thus it must offer itself to it. This demands that the mind cease to rely entirely upon the flow passing through the gates of the senses to quench its thirst for meaning and significance. The frontiers between these gates have to be reduced to smithereens, letting the eyes hear the roar of the trembling earth, the skin see the beauty of the twinkling stars, the ears smell the fragrance of the autumn breeze, the nose taste the sweetness of the sun, the tongue touches the texture of the ocean, with his consciousness abandoning all efforts to organize and analyze these seemingly incoherent impressions. When the walls have fallen and the flow is scattered, what is then left of the self? What is it that stealthily slips out of the ruins? No-thing remains of it, and this is precisely when the essence shows itself.[129] It does not need to be sought

[128]See: 吳平。《新譯碧巖集》。台北：三民書局股份有限公司, 2005. 「【題解】「六」指六根、六境、六大、六合等佛教用以概括諸法實相的基本法數 (名相)」

[129]See: 吳平。《新譯碧巖集》。台北：三民書局股份有限公司, 2005. : 「『法身』指的是捨棄自我、展現了「空」與「無我」的極至境界。... 如果杲落入言句之中，就很難識得法身。」

outside of the realm of the senses. It shines into the sky when the cloak of illusions has been taken off, revealing that it stood by itself, with no-thing under it.

Case 147 —Yunmen's Sesame Flatbread — 云門糊餅

Source: The Blue Cliff Record Case 77.

This case is identical to the Book of Serenity, case 78.

【中】

jǔ sēng wèn yún mén rú hé shì chāo fó yuè zǔ zhī tán mén yún hú bǐng

舉。僧問雲門：「如何是超佛越祖之談。」門云：「餬餅[1]。」

[1] 【餬餅】 S:【糊饼】 [hú bǐng]: "sesame flatbread." (See: 「胡麻所製之餅」 From: 《佛光大辭典電子版》。佛光山文教基金會, 2007. Page 5344)

【日】

こ そう うんもん と いか こ ちょうぶつ おっそ たん もんいわ こびょう

舉す。僧、雲門に問う、「如何なるか是れ超佛越祖の談。」門云く、「餬餅。」

【E】

A monk asked Yunmen: "What is meant by the sentence: 'To transcend the Buddhas and to go beyond the patriarchs?'" Yunmen said, "Sesame flatbread."[1]

[1] "Sesame flatbread": See note 1 of the Chinese text.

When man is not busy with the affairs of the world, and finally has time to yearn for the deeper meaning of life, he begins to try to uncover a reason for his existence and gain a vision of the nature of being itself. His gaze is then more often turned toward the unfathomable and ungraspable expanse of the heavens than toward the delimited and tangible earth.

Seeking to transcend all boundaries found before his eyes, craving to know what lies beyond the most sacred, the most primordial, the most universal and pervasive of all things, he climbs the highest steps built by mankind. He visits those living on the highest peaks, to interrogate them and become the recipients of their wisdom. Asking what lies beyond the frontiers of the heavens, he is left perplexed by the answer: "A dry loaf of bread." The man on the highest peak may have the broadest view of the celestial vault, but he is also someone sitting upon the bare earth, enjoying great intimacy with it. He knows that the way to go may be found among the stars above, but that it is more easily discovered right in front of us all, in each speck of dust covering the rocky face of the earth, in every thing found in our world that can be experienced by the senses, touching them with our hands, seeing them with our eyes, tasting them with our mouth. The extraordinary, what transcends the everyday world, may be best accessed from the most ordinary, the most common. Food may nonetheless be seen as holding a special place in our lives, as it offers us a concrete representation of the essence of our existence. The loaf of bread that we hold in our hands is indeed the result of the sacrifice of dozens of ears of wheat patiently grown during the summer, bathed in sunlight and rain, sprouting out of the earth and woven together with air, before they were harvested just before the coming of the fall. These living things will now feed the fire of life burning within our chest, the last link in an incredibly long chain, eons of evolution pointing to this instant, here and now. In this loaf, we may feel the whole of the earth and the sky, and gaze at what transcends them both.

The newcomer to the way is, of course, naïve in his questioning. He appears to foul the air with his worldly discourse, talking about what cannot be put into words, asking what cannot be answered through language. Lost in the heights, he must be pulled back to the earth, to what can be felt without mediation. When this foolish mouth speaks, it emits the stench of an open grave, and the one to whom the question was asked suddenly feels compelled to throw a large piece of dry bread inside it, filling this gaping, voluble, and foul mouth, ensuring that nothing more flows out of it.[130] The dry piece of bread is too dry to swallow, too large to spit out, and thus the novice suddenly gasps for breath. He is not only incapable of uttering a single word anymore, but he also sees his own death approaching. If one wants to transcend all that is, he may do so by becoming no-thing, embracing the great death shown to him thanks to a piece of bread. He will then understand that there is nothing to transcend, as there is nothing there in the first place. He can swallow the earth whole and drink the entirety of the heavens, holding them in his bosom, delving into an experience of what is neither earth nor life nor the skies, before he regurgitates them all, letting them once again

[130]See: 神保如天. 《従容録通解》。東京：無我山房, 1915. Page 497 (Case 78).

take their place, as this experience leaves a profound, indelible trace on the very core of his being, leaving him not knowing whether he lives or is dead, whether he is here or there.

Case 148 —Realizing Suddenly the Cause of Water —忽悟水因

Source: The Blue Cliff Record Case 78.

【中】

jǔ gǔ yǒu shí liù kāi shì yú yù sēng shí suí lì rù yù hū
舉。古有十六開士[1]，於浴僧時，隨例入浴。忽
wù shuǐ yīn zhū chán dé zuò me shēng huì tā dào miào chù xuān míng
悟水因。諸禪德[2]，作麼生會[3]。他道「妙觸宣明，
chéng fó zǐ zhù yě xū qī chuān bā xué shī dé
成佛子住」。[4] 也須七穿八穴始[5] 得。

[1] 【開士】 S:【开士】 [kāi shì]: another name for a "bodhisattva."

[2] 【禪德】 S:【禅德】 [chán dé]: "Zen practitioners."

[3] 【諸禪德，作麼生會】 [zhū chán dé zuò me shēng huì]: It is Xuedou who speaks here.

[4] A quote from the "Śūraṅgama Sūtra" (楞嚴經), chapter 5.

[5] 【始】 [shǐ]: "only then."

【日】

こ いにしえ じゅうろく かい じ あ よくそう とき れい
舉す。古え十六の開士有り、浴僧の時に、例に
したが にゅうよく はた すい いん さと しょぜんとく
隨って入浴するや、忽と水因を悟る。諸禪德、
いかに かれら みょうそせんみょう じょうぶつ しじゅう い
作麼生か他の「妙觸宣明、成佛子住」と道えるを
え ま すべか しちせんはっけつ はじ よ
會する。也た須らく七穿八穴して始めて得し。

【E】

In an ancient era, there were sixteen bodhisattvas. When the monks took a bath, they entered the bath according to their custom. [In there,] they suddenly realized the cause of water. Now, you Zen practitioners, how do you understand this?[1] The bodhisattvas said, "A marvelous experience!

Perfectly clear! We now abide [in the dwelling place of] the children of Buddha." Only by breaking through seven times and digging through eight times can you attain it too.

[1] Xuedou is the one speaking here.

A life in the world built by the hands and the minds of men is one surrounded with discrete things, sharp contours and countable objects, haphazardly arrayed according to their use and to the place they occupy in our existence. Seen as part of this world, men themselves come to be perceived as mere objects, standing out from a background we call the earth or nature. This all too natural behavior finds its roots at the emergence of the animal branch of the tree of life, as the birth of sensation led to the capacity to feel pain and fear for one's survival, and to experience pleasure and desire for food or a mate. This is why our mind carves out the continuous totality of the skies into a multitude of discrete things, which can become the target of our attention, singled out from the rest of nature according to a contour traced according to our needs. This is nonetheless merely a tool used for our survival and our perpetuation. It does not reflect our true nature, the essence that pervades all that is, enshrouded in the clouds of our perception, the phantasmagorias of our world.

The man of the world is thus a master of ten thousand things, but the enlightened, the man who has experienced the essence of being, seen his own true face, only knows and needs a single thing.[131] Such illumination rarely comes from plunging into a bath of sooty ink or walking on a long road made of pearly white paper. It rather often comes as the result of exposure to the most ordinary elements found upon the earth or in the sky, a conjunction of a sensation perfectly aligned with our yearning for the essence, revealing the whole cosmos through the narrowest door, a simple experience of a sound, a touch, a sight, a taste, or a smell. Such a sensation may also find itself perfectly corresponding to the sum of all the ideas we have concerning the essence, representing an embodiment of all our knowledge, expressed more clearly than in any sentence or book.

The earthly element that forms most of our body is also the locus where the first spark of life was kindled. It is what passes through

[131] See Xuedou's verse concerning this case: "A man who understands things only needs one thing." Chinese original: 「了事衲僧消一箇」, From: 《佛果圜悟禪師碧巖錄》。 CBETA (Case 78) (Concerning the translation of this passage, See: 吳平。《新譯碧巖集》。台北：三民書局股份有限公司, 2005. Page 835, Case 83).

our flesh in the most abundant quantity and represents an almost ideal doorway toward a realization of the fundamental nature of being. This element is, of course, water, the transparent fluid of life covering a large part of the earth. Entering a bathhouse, we may be exposed to different forms of it, something that attracts our attention to its nature. Heated by fire, the liquid is turned to steam pervading the air, but in contact with the earth or our skin, it quickly forms droplets condensed upon their surface. The invisible and continuous cloud of steam then becomes individual things, which can be counted and observed in their particularity, different from others. Their nature is nonetheless unchanged. This is only a trick of our mind, and it never ceases to be water. When one plunges into the bath or when the heat once again increases, these droplets once again become indistinguishable from the whole of the water, even though their nature has not changed at all. Paying close attention to the water of the sea, his sweat, or the clouds in the air, man may thus realize that he is a droplet of water just momentarily appearing distinct from the rest of the great body of water tightly enshrouding the earth. He is merely the surface of a wave on the ocean, transiently standing out before disappearing, yet always retains the same nature. All things around him represent a single thing. The contours separating them are a mirage, as is their standing out. The ocean is not a pile of individual droplets but rather an indistinguishable totality. It is not a thing, but rather no-thing, indistinctiveness itself, and all that exists, man, his world, the earth, or the sky, shares the same nature as this ocean. The illumination that comes with the perception of the essence of all that *is* therefore is not a liberation or a purification, but rather the collapse of the distinction between the prisoner and the open country beyond the walls of his prison, between the dust and the pristine surface of an infinite mirror.[132]

Case 149 —What Is the Buddha with the Ten Bodies —如何是十身調御

Source: The Blue Cliff Record Case 99.

【中】

jǔ sù zōng dì wèn zhōng guó shī rú hé shì shí shēn diào
舉。肅宗帝問忠國師：「如何是十身[1]調
yù guó shī yún tán yuè tà pí lú dǐng shàng xíng dì
御[2]。」國師云：「檀越[3]踏毘盧[4]頂上行。」帝

[132]See: Villalba, Dokusho. *Hekiganroku. Crónicas del Acantilado Azul.* Miraguano Ediciones. 1994. Page 124: "La iluminación no purifica nada, ni libera de ninguna ilusión. Iluminación significa que no hay nada que purificar ni nada de lo que liberarse."

yún guǒ rén bú huì guó shī yún mò rèn zì jǐ qīng jìng fǎ shēn
云：「寡人[5] 不會。」國師云：「莫認自己清淨法身[6]。」

[1] 【十身】 [shí shēn]: “the ten bodies.” Ten types of bodies associated with Vairocana Buddha, which are described in the Buddhāvataṃsaka Sutra (華厳経). The ten bodies are: The body of sentient beings (衆生身), the land’s body (国土身), the body of karmic retribution (業報身), the Śrāvaka-body (声聞身), the pratyekabuddha-body (獨覚身), the bodhisattva-body (菩薩身), the tathāgata-body (如来身), the wisdom-body (智身), the dharma-body (法身), the body of emptiness (虚空身).

[2] 【調御】 S:【调御】 [diào yù]: It designates the 調御丈夫 [diào yù zhàng fū], one of the ten appellations of a Buddha. This appellation comes from the Sanskrit “puruṣadamyasārathi” (पुरुषदम्यसारथि). It means “someone who guides men,” as a farmer guiding his oxen.

[3] 【檀越】 [tán yuè]: “a benefactor” (A term used by a monk toward a layperson).

[4] 【毗盧】 [pí lú]: “Vairocana [Buddha].” An abbreviation of 毗盧遮那 [pí lú zhē nà], transliteration of the Sanskrit “Vairocana” (वैरोचन). Vairocana is considered a “primordial Buddha,” the embodiment of the Buddhist concept of “emptiness.”

[5] 【寡人】 [guǎ rén]: “I.” A first-person pronoun used by the nobility.

[6] 【法身】 [fǎ shēn]: “the Dharma body.” A translation of the Sanskrit word “dharmakāya” (धर्म काय). One of the “three bodies” of a Buddha in Mahāyāna Buddhism. It may be seen as the essence of the whole of nature.

【日】

こ しゅくそうてい ちゅうこくし と いか こ
擧す。肅宗帝、忠國師に問う、「如何なるか是れ
じっしんちょうご こくしいわ だんのつ びる ちょうじょうふ
十身調御。」國師云く、「檀越、毘盧の頂上を蹈み
ゆ ていいわ かじんえ こくしいわ じこ
行け。」帝云く、「寡人會せず。」國師云く、「自己の
せいじょうほっしん したた なか
清淨法身を認むること莫れ。」

【E】

Emperor Suzong asked the National Teacher Zhong: “What is the Buddha with the ten bodies, guiding all living beings?”[1] The National Teacher said, “Sir! Step over the head of Vairocana[2] and continue!” The emperor said, “I don’t understand.” The National Teacher said, “Do not consider yourself to be the pure Dharma-body.”[3]

[1] “The Buddha with the ten bodies”: See note 1 of the Chinese text.

[2] “Vairocana”: See note 4 of the Chinese text.

[3] “Dharma-body”: See note 6 of the Chinese text.

Even when one sees himself as the son of the heavens, he is tempted to pay homage to what is found above him. His mind has separated the elevated from the lowly, the sacred from the profane, and all his thoughts are arrayed according to the order preestablished by his forefathers. The mind represents the incomprehensible through convoluted structures, defined with cryptic terms, all mingled with the fruit of men's fertile imagination, prompting them to assign attributes to what is not a thing, to name what cannot be fathomed, thereby reducing its mystery to a heap of obscure concepts. What is supposed to guide men out of the maze in which they are prisoners then represents one more obstacle on their paths. The celestial jewel illuminating man's world has been covered with its mud, veiling its light, concealing the direction toward which its brilliance points. It, however, remains there, waiting to be rediscovered. The layers added with the passing of each year over the primordial concept pointing toward the truth of the earth and the sky, found beyond the frontiers of the world, can be peeled off and discarded, revealing what these realms of nature were at their creation. Man then has a compass to navigate his world, fashioned by men to reveal the essence of all that is.

The compass is yet not the thing toward which it points. Once the direction has been seen clearly, it can be discarded, having served its purpose. Likewise, the concepts describing the essence of all things must at some points be left behind, so that one may plunge into the truth of being, abandoning all things, stripping himself of all the burdens he has accumulated during his life in the world, to become an empty mind in the place where there is not a single thing. One must trample the sacred and forget the profane. One must step over the heads of the gods and the saints themselves, forgetting their existence, to transcend all concepts that tell us about what goes beyond all concepts. Even the holy and the heavenly must be forsaken if one is to reach one's destin-ation, and when it is done, this is when understanding fails, but when clarity all the same abounds.

To go beyond the holy and the profane, to transcend the world and the sky, is to cease to understand, to become a fool for other men, ridiculed and despised. But this does not imply that the mere fact of not understanding or of being foolish for the worldly ones would be to perceive the essence of all that is, the great body formed by all things, which is itself no-thing. To incarnate the pure body of no-thing-ness is not merely to let go of the burdens of the world, but rather to become the irresistible force that steadily drives all things to the essence itself, to become the impassive guide that leads all living beings to the realization that no-thing-ness pervades all that is found in man's world, leads them

to see their own true face, without need for reflection or understanding. One then becomes the light illuminating the world, revealing the nature of all things.

Case 150 —Zizhao's Succession —子昭承嗣

Source: The Book of Serenity Case 64.

【中】

jǔ zī zhāo shǒu zuò wèn fǎ yǎn hé shàng kāi táng chéng sì hé
舉。子昭 首座問法眼：「和尚開堂承嗣[1] 何
rén yǎn yún dì zàng zhāo yún tài gū fù cháng qìng
人。」眼 云：「地藏。」昭 云：「太辜負[2] 長慶
xiān shī yǎn yún mǒu jiǎ bú huì cháng qìng yī zhuǎn yǔ zhāo
先師。」眼 云：「某甲不會長慶 一轉語[3] 。」昭
yún hé bú wèn yǎn yún wàn xiàng zhī zhōng dú lù shēn yì
云：「何不問。」眼 云：「『萬象之中獨露身[4] 』，意
zuò me shēng zhāo nǎi shù qǐ fú zi yǎn yún cǐ shì cháng qìng
作麼生。」昭 乃竪起拂子，眼 云：「此是長慶
chù xué dé di shǒu zuò fèn shàng zuò me shēng zhāo wú yǔ yǎn
處學得底[5] 。首座分上作麼生。」昭 無語，眼
yún zhī rú wàn xiàng zhī zhōng dú lù shēn shì bō wàn xiàng bù bō
云：「只如『萬象之中獨露身。』，是撥[6] 萬象不撥
wàn xiàng zhāo yún bù bō yǎn yún liǎng gè cān suí zuǒ
萬象。」昭 云：「不撥。」眼 云：「兩箇。」參隨左
yòu jiē yún bō wàn xiàng yǎn yún wàn xiàng zhī zhōng dú lù shēn
右皆云：「撥萬象。」眼 云：「『萬象之中獨露身』，
nǐ
聻[7] 。」

[1] 【承嗣】 [chéng sì]: "to be an heir [of someone else]."

[2] 【辜負】 S:【辜负】 [gū fù]: "to let down"/ "to disappoint."

[3] 【轉語】 S:【转语】 [zhuǎn yǔ]: "a turning-word," that is, a short sentence or a word that is meant to trigger deep enlightenment.

[4] 【身】 [shēn]: "the body." Here, it designates the entire substance of the universe, linked to the "dharma body."

[5] 【底】 [di]: Equivalent to the modern Chinese particle 的 .

[6] 【撥】 S:【拨】 [bō]: "to push aside with a limb or an object."

[7] 【聻】 [nǐ]: Originally designates a type of ghost (鬼) who has experienced death, changing its nature, becoming a "niǐ" (聻), as told in the "You Ming Lu" (幽冥錄), a medieval collection of tales. Here, it seems to be used onomatopoeically, but a link with the aforementioned meaning is also probable, perhaps even a way to call his interlocutors "demons" or "ghosts." Taking this link into account, the word has therefore been translated "boo," evoking the sound of a ghost, but leaving its interpretation wide open.

【日】

こ　ししょうしゅそ　ほうげん　と　おしょうかいどうなんびと
舉す。子昭首座法眼に問う、「和尚開堂何人に
じょうし　げんいわ　ちぞう　しょういわ　はなは　ちょうけい
承嗣するや。」眼云く、「地藏。」昭云く、「甚だ長慶
せんし　こふ　げんいわ　それがしちょうけい　いってんご
先師に辜負す。」眼云く、「某甲長慶の一轉語を
え　しょういわ　なんと　げんいわ　ばん
會せず。」昭云く、「何ぞ問わざる。」眼云く、「萬
ぞう しちゅうどくろしん　い　さもさん　しょうなわ　ほっす　じゅき
象之中獨露身、意作麼生。昭乃ち拂子を竪起す。」
げんいわ　これ　こ　ちょうけい　ところ　がくとく　てい
眼云く、「此は是れ長慶の處に學得する底なり、
しゅそぶんじょう さもさん　しょう　むご　げんいわ　ただばんぞう
首座分上作麼生。」昭、無語。眼云く、「只萬象
しちゅうどくろしん　ごと　こ　ばんぞう　ばら　ばん
之中獨露身というが如きは是れ萬象を撥うか萬
ぞう　ばら　しょういわ　ばら　げんいわ　りょう
象を撥わざるか。」昭云く、「撥わず。」眼云く、「兩
こ　さんすい　さゆう みなばら　い　げんいわ　ばんぞうし
箇。參隨の左右皆撥うと云う。」眼云く、「萬象之
ちゅうどくろしん　にい
中獨露身、蹔。」

【E】

Head Monk Zizhao asked Fayan: “The master has opened a new meditation hall, but whose heir is he?” Fayan said, “Dizang.” Zizhao said, “The late master Changching, [under whom the master first studied], must have been disappointed.” Fayan said, “I still don’t understand one of Changqing’s turning words.” Zizhao said, “Why don’t you ask?” Fayan said, “‘The one body[1] manifests itself in the myriad of phenomena’, what does it mean?” Zizhao then raised his whisk. Fayan said, “This is something you learned at Changching’s place, but what does the Head Monk think?” Zizhao did not utter a word. Fayan said, “When one says: ‘The one body manifests itself in the myriad of phenomena,’ is the myriad of phenomena swept away or not?” Zizhao said, “Not swept away.” Fayan said, “Both.” All those attending on both the right and the left side said, “Swept away.” Fayan said, “‘The one body manifests itself in the myriad of phenomena’, Boo!”[2]

[1] "One body": see note 4 of the Chinese text

[2] "Nii": See note 7 of the Chinese text.

Light is something that cannot be touched or grasped, but rather only received, poured into the eyes when they are open and turned toward the source of brilliance, ready to welcome it. Likewise, enlightenment is antithetical to understanding, the grasping by the mind, and it only occurs when one has let go of the will to understand, to let oneself be embraced by an experience. The one body of being manifests itself in the myriad of things found upon the earth, in the sky, and in man's world, but it cannot be understood through reason. Even the mere realization of such manifestation itself seldom occurs, as these things are too familiar for their essence to be seen. The earthly objects around us represent such manifestations, even though our attention while observing them is so focused upon their use that it veils their essence. To the world, it is an instrument helping in the accomplishment of something, but it is also a piece of the seamless whole of the earth, made of stardust wandering through the inscrutable depths of the cosmos since the unfolding of the heavens themselves. In it, one may see the entirety of the heavens and of what they contain. When I raise my whisk, it is the entirety of the earth that is raised, held in my hand, embraced by my mind, with the essence of this object being one with the essence of all that is.

The experience of the one body nonetheless cannot be passed on from generation to generation. Observing the manner by which someone embodies the depth of his mind, the extent of his realization, one may perceive that the one in front of him has seen through the use and pierced the essence, but this will always remain conjecture. The whisk or the finger may be raised by a monkey or by the wise man of the way, and both may appear indistinguishable from one another. One may feign victory as well as failure. The wise may choose to appear as a fool, and the knave may veil his idiocy in a cloak of silence as well as in one woven of words borrowed from a mouth of gold. This is why a seemingly worried master relentlessly submits his followers to various trials. He presents them with choices, inviting them to jump into the trap of "yes" and "no," of "right" and "wrong," to see if they have caught a glimpse of what is hidden by the use of things, including words themselves. If one sees a difference between the earth and the world, between no-thing-ness and the myriads of things, he has yet to perceive the one body. If one does not see the difference between the earth and the world, between no-thing-ness and the myriads of things, he is also mistaken. As long as there is something to be seen in one's mind, he is blind. The world and the earth are one, just like one cannot separate the use from the essence. When this unicity is felt rather than simply known, the worries

concerning one's lineage vanish. Words fade into silence, but then a roar emerges out of the depths of the master's chest: "Boo!" This spooky roar clears out both the world and the earth, like a ghost scaring away all those present in its vicinity! It sweeps away the myriads of things, but also no-thing-ness itself! A violent tempest is stirred up by this sound, and the mind then becomes a plain where all the desiccated leaves and the dust of the world are washed away by the downpours of dark autumn clouds. Winter may come. The follower may be scattered, and life may retreat into the soil, invisible, but the spring will soon come. The way will one day once again be seen and embraced, and a worthy successor will emerge from the people, like a flower piercing through a carpet of snow at the first sign of the arrival of the spring, the heavenly wheels continuing their endless revolutions, leading all things where they should be, and all creatures to their destiny, without the need for us to worry about it.

Case 151 —Yunmen's Sound and Color — 雲門聲色

Source: The Book of Serenity Case 82.

【中】

jǔ　yún mén　shì zhòng yún　wén shēng wù dào　jiàn sè míng xīn
舉。雲門 示眾云：「聞聲悟道，見色明心。—
guān shì yīn pú sà　jiāng qián lái mǎi hú bīng　fàng xià shǒu què shì mán tóu
觀世音 菩薩[1] 將錢來買餬餅，放下手却是饅頭。」

[1] 【觀世音菩薩】 S:【观世音菩萨】 [guān shì yīn pú sà]: Guanyin, the Bodhisattva of Compassion or Goddess of Mercy. Literally "the Bodhisattva who perceives the sound of the world."

【日】

こ　うんもんしゅ　しめ　いわ　もんしょうごどう　けん
舉す。雲門衆に示して云く、「聞聲悟道、見
しきみょうしん　かんぜおんぼさつせん　も　きた　こびょう　か
色明心、觀世音菩薩錢を將ち來って餬餅を買う、
て　ほうげ　かえ　こ　まんじゅう
手を放下すれば却って是れ饅頭。」

【E】

Yunmen instructed the congregation and said, "'To be enlightened to [the existence of] the way through hearing a

sound, to clarify the mind through seeing color' —Bodhisattva Avalokitesvara[1] comes with some money to buy [cheap] sesame flatbread. He lets what is in his hands go, and now there are [nice] steamed buns instead."

[1] "Bodhisattva Avalokitesvara": See note 1 of the Chinese text.

The way of the sky has no beginning or end. It can be found anywhere, at any time, and by anyone, but it often comes to the one who is not actively seeking it. Providence may indeed offer such a man signs, manifestations of the way revealing its presence and inviting him to follow the course it traces. If one lends his ears to the whisper of the earth or the murmur of the air, he may be able to discern the calling of nature itself, the melody of being resounding in the sky, resonating with his heart, unlocking the doors surrounding him and letting him perceive the whole that is heard through a single note, even if it is only for an instant. If one opens up his eyes to the colorful glow of the heavens, he may then find the capacity to observe the truth of nature, to get a glimpse of the primordial spark and the last flicker of the cosmos, visible in the seemingly most common sight, which nonetheless represents a wink of the celestial ones, a clue leading to the truth of being, offered to the one who is ready to embrace the way and become its instrument when he will return to lead the throngs of dwellers of the world. A sound may thus enlighten one's path, and a sight may be a deafening sound clearing the mind of all the things occupying it. When all boundaries crumble, and one begins to see the sound of earth and to hear the colors of the sky, then one is ready to experience the truth of all that is, raw and unmediated, having become an empty vessel ready to receive the libation of the heavenly ones.

When the beckoning of the merciful ones has been heeded, and the signs of the celestial ones have been followed, one sees that the things that are valued by the servants of the world are worthless to the man of the way. They are coins used by the slaves to buy their freedom, but once they are liberated, they no longer have any need of them, as they freely roam upon the earth, fed directly by the tree of life, sleeping under the stars, without possessing any thing, without desire or regret. Embracing poverty, letting go of all things, one may appear to sacrifice his well-being and his self, but others may soon find out that the man with none may perhaps be the most fortunate of all.[133] He lets go of

[133]See: Yamada, Kou'un, *Shôyôroku (Book of Equanimity)* [Unpublished manuscript]: "It is only when you throw it all away that, for the first time, you can be 'on the way to return home', as it says in the Introduction."

coins of gold and silver, and then finds something more precious than anything else, something that satiates all his needs, that satisfies all his desires, leaving him wanting nothing more. Being complete, fulfilled, while having no-thing, he will no longer grow hungry. He will never suffer from thirst. Death itself will have no grip upon him, as he is where there is neither life nor death. Without remembering the word "mercy," he nonetheless embodies it when he is seen wandering through the busy avenues filled with greed, lust, pain, and despair, without a thought offering to all the gift he received, extending his empty hands to offer the indigent all that he has, which is no-thing.

Case 152 —Linji's Great Enlightenment — 臨濟大悟

Source: The Book of Serenity Case 86.

【中】

jǔ lín jì wèn huáng bò rú hé shì fó fǎ dí dí dà
舉。臨濟 問 黃蘗：「如何是佛法的的[1] 大
yì bò biàn dǎ rú shì sān dù nǎi cí bò jiàn dà yú
意。」蘗 便打。如是三度[2] 乃辭。[3] 蘗 見 大愚，
yú wèn shén me chù lái jì yún huáng bò lái yú
愚 問：「甚麼處來。」濟 云：「黃蘗 來。」愚
yún huáng bò yǒu hé yán jù jì yún mǒu jiǎ sān wèn fó
云：「黃蘗 有何言句。」濟 云：「某甲三問佛
fǎ dí dí dà yì sān dù chī bàng bù zhī yǒu guò wú guò yú
法的的大意。三度喫棒[4] 。不知有過無過。」愚
yún huáng bò rèn me lǎo pó wèi ěr dé chè kùn gèng lái wèn yǒu
云：「黃蘗 恁麼。老婆為爾得徹困[5] ，更來問：『有
guò wú guò jì yú yán xià dà wù
過無過。』」濟 於言下大悟。

[1] 【的的】 [dí dí]: "clear."

[2] 【度】 [dù]: "a number of times."

[3] 【辭】 S:【辞】 [cí]: "to take one's leave."

[4] 【喫】 [chī]: variant of 吃 [chī]: "to eat." Here used figuratively: "to receive blows."

[5] 【困】 [kùn]: "to be exhausted" / "to be in pain."

【日】

こ りんざい おうばく と いか こ
舉す。臨濟、黄檗に問う、「如何なるか是れ

佛法的的の大意。」棨便ち打つ。是の如きこと三度乃ち棨を辭して大愚に見ゆ。愚、問う、「甚麼の處より來たる。」濟云く、「黄檗より來たる。」愚云く、「黄檗何の言句か有りし。」濟云く、「某甲三佛法的的の大意を問い三度棒を喫す、知らず過有りや過無しや。」愚云く、「黄檗恁麼に老婆爾が爲に徹困なることを得たり。更に來って有過無過を問う。」濟、言下に大悟す。

【E】

Linji asked Huangbo: “What is the clear meaning of Buddhism?” Huangbo then hit him. This happened three times before Linji took his leave. He then went to see Dayu, and Dayu asked: “Where have you come from?” Linji said, “I come from Huangbo.” Dayu said, “What did Huangbo say?” Linji said, “This one asked him three times what the clear meaning of Buddhism is, and got his stick three times, still not knowing: was a fault committed or not?” Dayu said, “Huangbo was like that, treating you [gently and patiently] like an old grandmother exhausting herself for you, and still you come here and ask: ‘Was a fault committed or not?’” With these words, Linji was greatly enlightened.

When the new follower desires to know where he is headed, he may inquire into the course taken by the great men of the way who have returned to the earth long ago. Even the most impressive master of the earth and the world, one who has guided entire generations toward a revelation of the way of the sky, began just as we all have, naively taking our first steps into the ancient forest formed by those who embody the union of earth and sky, like majestic and old trees. Seeing how these trees were once minuscule seeds carried by the wind to a fertile soil, we may thereby find inspiration for our own spiritual journey, our walk on the path.

When we first met a man of experience, a good-hearted guide who was ready to point the direction toward which we were destined to advance, he naturally asked where we came from. He thereby raised his walking staff and plunged it into our mind, testing the waters, seeing whether they are deep or shallow. This seemingly mundane question is a bottomless well out of which one may draw as much water as he desires. One who has yet to perceive the nature of the earth will instinctively answer by naming a location defined by the world of men, whether it be the dwelling place of a particular man, a village, or a particular part of the land. Another, one who has seen his true face, may nonetheless draw out an entire ocean from this simple question, realizing that the origin is the destination, and that where he comes from includes the totality of the earth, the world, life, and the skies, the fullness of the past, present, and future, forming a totality rather than a sum of discontinuous elements.

The one using the names of the world is blind to the nature of the earth. One who seeks the fundamental truth with the same words is lost in the clouds, the misty heights far above the tangibility of the earth, a realm of imagination and illusion. Slumbering, forgetting himself in the land of dreams, such a man must be awakened, not with gentle words or a delicate touch of the hand, but rather with a sign that will show him the way to go, pointing out the earth, the reality with which he has grown too distant and oblivious. A blow of a hard, wooden stick—this is what the sleeper needs to be awakened and to forgo the pleasures of dreams. He is violently brought back to the earth, pushed from the cloudy heights to the naked, rocky ground, like a father pushing away his child away from the road as a running horse advances toward him, threatening his life.

The sleeper may nonetheless be reluctant to leave his comfortable state of slumber, having forgotten the difference between dream and reality, the clouds and the earth. Several blows may be needed, but even then, some will not be awakened. Some may indeed first need to be led by the melodies of the world, with gentle words pointing out their going astray, their own condition, to which they are often blind. There is always a time for the stick and a time for the helping hand, and their union is what is most prone to bear fruit. When the stick appears for what it is, the earth itself, and mercy itself, this is when the dawn rises upon the mind of the novice and the clouds are scattered by the light and the warmth of the heavens. All shall one day, sooner or later, experience such an illumination, such an unveiling of the nature of the earth, being then given the task of passing on the staff to a new generation, combining the words and the stick, the world and the earth, while being grateful for what they themselves had received, contemplating the well-trodden path behind them.

Case 153 —Shushan's Being and Non-Being —疎山有無

Source: The Book of Serenity Case 87.

【中】

jǔ shū shān dào guī shān biàn wèn chéng shī yǒu yán yǒu jù
舉。疎山 到 溈山 便問：「承[1] 師有言：『有句
wú jù rú téng yī shù hū rán shù dǎo téng kū jù guī hé chù
無句如藤[2] 倚[3] 樹。』忽然樹倒，藤枯句歸何處。」
guī shān hē hē dà xiào shū shān yún mǒu jiǎ sì qiān lǐ mài bù dān
溈山 呵呵大笑， 疎山 云：「某甲四千里賣布單[4]
lái hé shàng hé dé xiàng nòng guī huàn shì zhě qǔ qián huán zhè shàng
來。和尚何得[5] 相弄[6] 。」 溈 喚侍者取錢，還這上
zuò suì zhǔ yún xiàng hòu yǒu dú yǎn lóng wèi zǐ diǎn pò qù zài
座遂囑[7] 云：「向後有獨眼龍， 為子點破[8] 去。」在
hòu dào míng zhāo jǔ qián huà zhāo yún guī shān kè wèi tóu zhèng wěi
後到 明昭 舉前話， 昭 云：「 溈山 可謂頭正尾
zhèng zhī shì bú yù zhī yīn shū fù wèn shù dǎo téng kū jù
正，只是不遇知音[9] 。」 疎 復問：「樹倒，藤枯句
guī hé chù zhāo yún gèng shī guī shān xiào zhuǎn xīn shū yú
歸何處。」 昭 云：「更使 溈山 笑轉新。」 疎 於
yán xià yǒu xīng nǎi yún guī shān yuán lái xiào lǐ yǒu dāo
言下有省[10] ，乃云：「 溈山 元來笑裏有刀。」

[1] 【承】 [chéng]: "to receive." Here, in the sense of "to have heard."

[2] 【籐】 [téng]: variant of 藤 [téng], meaning "rattan" or "vine."

[3] 【倚】 S:【倚】 [yǐ]: "to lean on" / "to rely upon."

[4] 【布單】S:【布单】[bù dān]: "a sheet of cloth." By extension, it here seems to designate the clothes of the monk.

[5] 【何得】 [hé dé]: "how could someone [do something]." Equivalent to the modern Chinese: 怎能 / 怎會 .

[6] 【相弄】 [xiàng nòng]: "to make fun of [someone]" / "to tease."

[7] 【囑】 S:【嘱】 [zhǔ]: "to enjoin" / "to urge."

[8] 【點破】 S:【点破】 [diǎn pò]: "to lay bare in a few words" / "to point out bluntly."

[9] 【知音】[zhī yīn]: Literally "someone who knows the sound," meaning: "an intimate friend" / "a soul mate." This term originates from the famous story of Bó Yá (伯牙), a musician dwelling and playing on a mountain, who befriended a humble woodcutter, Zhōng Zǐ Qī (鍾子期), who would always perfectly understand the emotions that the musician put in his melodies. After Zhōng Zǐ Qī's death, Bó Yá broke his instrument and never played again. This story can be found in the Daoist classic "Liè zi" (列子).

[10] 【有省】 [yǒu xǐng]: "to gain an insight."

【日】

舉す。疎山、溈山に到って便ち問う、「承る、師

言えること有り、有句無句は藤の樹に倚るが如し

と、忽然として樹倒るれば藤枯る、句何の處に

歸するや。」溈山、呵呵大笑す。疎山云く、「某甲

四千里に布單を賣り來る、和尚何ぞ相弄すること

を得たる。」溈、侍者を喚んで錢を取って這の

上座に還せと。遂に囑して云く、「向後獨眼龍有っ

て子が爲に點破し去ること在らん。」後に明昭に

到りて前話を擧す。昭云く、「溈山をば頭正しく

尾正しと謂つべし、只是れ知音に遇わず。」疎復

問う、「樹倒るれば藤枯る、句は何の處に歸する

や。」昭云く、「更に溈山をして笑轉た新ならし

む。」疎、言下に於て省有り。乃ち云く、「溈山元

來笑裏に刀有り。」

【E】

Shushan came to Guishan and then asked: “Teacher, I have heard that you have said, ‘Words of being and words of non-being are just like wisteria wound around a tree.’ If suddenly the tree falls down and the wisteria withers, where will the words return to?” Guishan burst into laughter. Shushan said, “This one has made a journey of four thousand [Chinese] miles, and [even] sold [the pieces of] cloth [covering his body] to come here. Why does the Master make fun of him?” Guishan asked his attendant to bring some money, to reimburse the monk [for his travel expenses] and then said, “In the future, there will be a one-eyed dragon, who will allow the disciple to see through this matter.” Later, Shushan went to Mingzhao and told him about the aforementioned

conversation. Mingzhao said, “One may say that Guishan is right from start to finish, but he did not meet someone whose mind was in harmony with his own.” Shushan asked again: “If the tree falls down and the wisteria withers, where will the words return to?” Mingzhao said, “It would make Guishan laugh even more.” Hearing this, Shushan gained some insight, and then said, “From the beginning, there was a sword in Guishan’s laughter.”

Words are marvelous tools of representation. They can invoke the presence of a thing with a mere utterance or a scribble, considerably extending the power of the one wielding these instruments, as they can be symbolically grasped and manipulated in his mind. This power is, even so, also derived from the contrast between what is represented by these words. If there is only one word, not even contrasted with silence, it thus designates everything and nothing, and is largely useless. The power of words is manifested through the difference between them, and between what they designate. There cannot be any concept of “being” without a concept of “non-being.” A “yes” is only meaningful when a “no” is possible. Both are like wisteria wound around a tree, inextricably bound to one another, sharing a common fate.

As things belonging to the world of man, words, despite this fact, first rest upon life itself. Men support these words with the strength of their mind, their memory, and if they die, or simply decide to cease to be the pillars bearing this world upon their shoulders, it will then collapse without delay. This may occur when words have fulfilled their purpose, when man no longer has need of them, or no longer has need of any thing. When death comes, as the putrefaction of the body or as a state of mind where one has ceased to be attached to life itself, the tree then dies also, and the wisteria wound around it soon withers. The characters meticulously inscribed upon the earth by numerous generations of men remain, but their nature is transformed. They appear unchanged, their shape still recognizable upon the medium on which they were traced, but they have lost their meaning. Without the support of the mind of man, of his world, they are now mere drawings, traces without signification, no different from those left by the birds walking on the muddy soil showered with the autumn rains. Likewise, the spoken words, the songs, and the discourses of men then become mere sounds, devoid of signification, like the rumbling of the waves crashing upon the shore, or a thunderous laughter. The death of the body is a return to the earth, taking all the thoughts and ideas supported by it to the grave. The death of the self, on the other hand, may represent a discovery of the truth of the

earth, as the earthly nature of things is all that is left to behold when all meaning has vanished, when the towers of signification of the world have crashed down to the ground. Then, all that is to be said will be heard in the laughter of the one who is no one. His laugh then becomes a tremendously powerful shockwave, shattering the trees and cutting out the wisteria. It is a sword that cuts through being and no-thing-ness, presence and absence.[134] It deafens and blinds those exposed to this roar, leaving them only hearing no-thing, seeing no-thing, and yet they then come into contact with the truth of the earth, the root of all things.

Case 154 —The Bell and the Seven Pieces of Clothing —鐘聲七條

Source: The Gateless Barrier Case 16.

【中】

yún mén yuē shì jiè rèn me guǒng kuò yīn shén xiàngzhōngshēng lǐ pī
雲門 曰：「世界恁麼廣闊，因甚向鐘聲裏披[1]
qī tiáo
七條[2] 。」

[1] 【披】 [pī]: “to drape over one’s shoulders.”

[2] 【七條】 S:【七条】 [qī tiáo]: “the seven pieces [of clothing worn by monks].”

【日】

こ うんもんいわ せかい いんも こうかつ なん
舉す。雲門曰く、「世界恁麼に廣闊たり。甚に
よ しょうせい り むか しちじょう き
因ってか鐘聲裏に向って七條を披す。」

【E】

Yunmen asked: “The world is so vast, why do you respond to the sound of a bell and put on the seven pieces of clothing [worn by monks] ?”[1]

[1] “The seven pieces of clothing”: See note 2 of the Chinese text.

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[134]See: 神保如天. 《從容録通解》。東京：無我山房, 1915. Page 543 (Case 87).

More numerous are the stars adorning the heavens than the grains of sand scattered across the entire surface of the earth. Man's world is a mere speck of dust caught in a monumental sandstorm, and we are only a minuscule particle carried upon it. And yet, we often aggrandize ourselves, considering some among us sons of heaven, or seeing ourselves as the center point around which the creation gravitates. The world around us, built by the arms and the brains of our predecessors, appears to rest on a secure foundation, established in remote eras, bringing order to the life of its inhabitants, constraining their actions as well as their thoughts. We naturally tend to obey this order whose building principles have long been forgotten, lost in the oblivion of history, without questioning its soundness, seldom doubting the benefits it claims to provide us. Like machines, most of us instinctively follow the signs offered to us by this world, responding to its callings, obeying its commands, rendering us servants of this world, rather than men wielding its power for our own profit.

When the bell is rung at the break of dawn, we put on our clothes, veiling our nakedness, our earthly nature, and we cover ourselves with pieces of clothing, endowed with meaning in this world, identifying us according to our position, wealth, gender, or faith. These pieces of cloth are the skin of the world into which we slip to show ourselves in its midst, our uniform, a symbol of our submission to its pre-established order. Once we have put on this uniform of the world, we then answer the calling of the bell, inviting us to assemble to perform our duties, joining other men to accomplish a purpose set by others, perhaps even long before we were born onto the earth.

The period of obedience to the order of the world nonetheless only becomes meaningful when it is contrasted with a time of rebellion, a period when one refuses to submit to the world, when one begins to question its very foundations, seeing them as resting on a swamp. To perceive the value of the world, the greatness of the order that it fosters, one must first experience the raw nature of the earth, the realm where all is meaningless and yet all is clear, where there is not a single thing, and yet where everything can be perceived in its most genuine form. One should therefore learn to listen to the ringing of the bell without hearing anything in it, simply letting our inner ear resonate in unison with it, our mind completely empty of any thought, our body not even faintly responding to it. Remaining naked, immobile, feeling the minute vibrations of the air passing through our skin and our bones, it is the entirety of the heavens and the earth that may be heard in these impressions of our senses, and this without hearing a single thing. The ringing is perfectly intertwined with silence, just like the earth is tightly intertwined with the world, and one may thus hear them both without distinguishing them, welcoming this sensation of the truth of being. One

may then once again heed the calling, listening to the sign, embodying the subtle alliance of the contrasting realms, like white flowers sprouting from a blanket of snow covering the soil showered with sunlight. One may awaken to the truth by seeing the morning star or by hearing the ringing of a bell, and he will then see the earth through the things of the world and feel the world in each contact with the earth, neither submitting nor rebelling, simply playing with everything, attached to nothing.

Case 155 —Dongshan's Three Pounds —洞山三斤

Source: The Gateless Barrier Case 18.

This case is identical to the Blue Cliff Record, Case 12.

【中】

dòng shān hé shàng yīn sēng wèn rú hé shì fó shān yún má sān jīn
洞山和尚因僧問:「如何是佛。」山云:「麻三斤。」

【日】

こ とうざんおしょう ちな そう と いか こ ぶつ さんいわ ま さんぎん
擧す。洞山和尚、因みに僧問う、如何なるか是れ佛。山云く、麻三斤。

【E】

A monk asked Dongshan: "What is Buddha?" Dongshan said, "Three pounds of flax."

The greatest treasure we could ever find is at all times right in front of our noses. We search for it in the heights of the heavens, but we already have it. It is our birthright, our inheritance, and all that we have ever possessed. It cannot be taken away from us, and it will never decay or vanish. If we desperately search for it, it is only because of our blindness to its nature, but this blindness is nonetheless the first step toward a glorious revelation. One who has always been endowed with

the gift of sight will indeed seldom truly realize the true value of this kind of sensation, whereas one deprived of it for a long time will perceive it under a different light, seeing more than its use, and also catching a glimpse of its essence. When one is plunged in uttermost darkness, the faintest spark shines in all its glory, and the nature of light is more visible than when showered with the heavenly fire of our star. Therefore, there is a time to explore the heights of the world, seeking to know the fundamental essence of being through the accounts of men of the past who inscribed the results of lifetimes of experiences on parchments and scrolls. Words may be deceitful, and further conceal the truth of the earth. Yet, they are like a baptism, where a man first immerses his flesh in water, severing himself from the sky and the air, retreating into the dark and watery body of the earth, before emerging from it. He then opens his eyes wide and feels the heavenly warmth upon his skin, its radiance entering his eyes, seen anew, as if it were the first time. The question of the essence belongs to the world, like all questions, and it is therefore natural for it to be expressed with words, as imperfect and caricatural as they may be. The answer to this question, however, does not belong to the world, but rather to the earth.

What is the fundamental essence of being? It is what we hold in our hands right now. It is also our very hands, the blood flowing into our veins, the eyes with which we contemplate our own flesh and the world around us. There is no difference between our hands and the arms of the galaxy, gently glowing during the darkest hours of the night, when we have fled the fires kindled by men to chase away the shadows enfolding the earth. A single strand of hair may teach us more about the truth of being than the heavenly wheels continuously carrying the earth and our world. It is by sharpening the senses rather than through the accumulation of knowledge that we may come to such realization, focusing our attention upon the earthiness of the earth, the weight and tangibility of the objects we hold and touch, feeling the materiality of our own body intertwined with the work of our senses, with the contrast between the sensor and the sensed at times highlighted, at times blurred, and with our heart rejoicing in this contrast between contrasts and uniformity, between the distinguishable parts and the seamless whole. The revelation of the essence lies in the passage between blindness and sight, darkness and brightness, world and earth, with each being necessary in order for the other to exist.

What is the fundamental essence of being then? Three pounds of flax. If one tries to dissect these words to determine their meaning, seeing them only as pieces of the world, it means that one is blind to the earth.[135] Vulgar calculation, quantification, and definitions are signs that

[135]See Xuedou's verse concerning this case: "One who considers Dongshan according to the things he said or his own speculations is like a lame and blind turtle entering

one is caught in the snare of the world, and yet if one is afraid of them, he equally lives under the yoke of the world. The truth appears when one finds the unicity of the contrasts, unafraid of appropriating either side temporarily, dancing with the earth and the world. We hold these three pounds of flax in our hands, seeing them as a thing, associated with a precise value, a weight, a color, and a quality. It is a thing of the world, but we also see it as the entirety of the earth and the sky, the seamless whole, without a trace of ideation in our mind, purely experiencing it with our senses, with no difference between the flax and the hands holding it, only the essence of all that is, revealed to us, here and now, without boundary or any trace of thought, the answer offered to us, flax as smooth as a mirror, in which we see ourselves and the entirety of the sky.

Case 156 —Yunmen's Shit-Stick —雲門屎橛

Source: The Gateless Barrier Case 21.

【中】

yún mén yīn sēng wèn rú hé shì fó mén yún gān shī jué

雲門因僧問：「如何是佛。」門云：「乾屎橛[1]。」

[1] 【乾屎橛】 [gān shǐ jué]: "a dry shit-stick." Pieces of bamboo that were used to wipe feces.

【日】

こ うんもんちなそうといかこ ぶつもんいわかんしけつ

擧す。雲門因みに僧問う、「如何なるか是れ佛。」門云く、「乾屎橛。」

【E】

A monk asked Yunmen: "What is Buddha?" Yunmen answered him: "A dry shit-stick.[1] "

[1] "Dry shit-stick": See note 1 of the Chinese text.

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an empty vale." Chinese original: 「展事投機見洞山跛鱉盲龜入空谷」, From: 《佛果圜悟禪師碧巖錄》。 CBETA (Case 12).

As long as one remains the main character of his own life, he will fail to see his true face. The main character must learn to retreat into the background, and bring the inconspicuous, the overlooked, to the front of the stage, letting it be exposed under the light of the great luminary, its nature finally considered, its details observed. The uses of the things of the world can then be set aside, so that the substance can be discovered. Through this consideration of the substance of things, one may notice that the frontier separating them from others is directly linked to their use. They all share the same essence, which pervades all and unites all that is. The differences between them are mere reflections of the roles they play in the world. The rare and the precious are exalted, with the eyes of the audience all pointed at them, while the lowly are ignored, and the foul is concealed, kept far from their sight. To walk the path is nonetheless to uncover what is veiled by everydayness, to see things for what they are, upon the earth, as much as for what they are used for, in the world of men. Thus, the eye of the man of the way inspects the dark corners of the world. It attentively and with an acute curiosity observes what would induce revulsion in others. It searches for the most common and pierces it with its glance to reveal its extraordinary nature, refusing to let itself be restrained by the arbitrary order of the world, the hierarchies established by men of yore, long returned to the earth, and whose motivations have largely fallen into oblivion. There, the deceitfulness of the world may finally be revealed to him, without negating its incredible usefulness. The use may then be reconciled with the substance, both shining in their particularity, and yet also appearing in their unicity, like snow heaped in a silver bowl.

When the order of the world has been shown in all its arbitrariness through the observation of the lowly, the ignored, the disgusting, the eye may then be turned toward the self, toward the main character of our life. Our body may be seen as a living tube, through which a flow of water mingled with the bodies of other living things passes, part of it seeping through our organs, running into our blood, becoming the substance we are made of, continuously renewing our body, while other parts of it, having served their purpose, are discarded, excreted. The excrement departing from our body is as much a part of us as any other. Each particle forming our flesh will one day be shed and returned to the earth, replaced by others, until the fire of life burning within our chest is finally quenched and the whole that we form decays and is consumed by other living things. Considered in our substance, as a thing of the earth, we are the excrement we deposit on the ground. There is no fundamental difference between it and us. The world has taught us that it is impure and even vulgar to simply mention it, but by seeing the lowest, the most unappreciated things of the world in their truth, it is the common essence of all things that may be revealed to our eyes, allowing us to see beyond the arbitrary hierarchies, the artificial oppositions. The

decaying leaves on the ground during the fall are no different from the green buds appearing at the signs of the arrival of spring, representing only a continuous flow of the substance of the heavens. Once this truth is perceived, the excrement may find its place in the temple hall, and the god may be honored by squatting down in front of it, offering ourselves to the divine nature pervading all things.

Case 157 —The Cypress Tree in Front of the Garden —庭前柏樹

Source: The Gateless Barrier Case 37.

This case is identical to the Book of Serenity, case 47.

【中】

zhào zhōu yīn sēng wèn rú hé shì zǔ shī xī lái yì zhōu yún tíng qián bǎi shù zǐ
趙州因僧問：「如何是祖師西來意[1]。」州云：「庭前柏樹子。」

[1] 【西來意】 [xī lái yì]: "the meaning of the coming from the West [of Bodhidharma]."

【日】

こ じょしゅう ちな そうと いか こ そし にしらい い しゅうわ ていぜん はくじゅし
擧す。趙州、因みに僧問う、「如何なるか是れ祖師西來の意。」州云く、「庭前の柏樹子。」

【E】

A monk asked Zhaozhou: "What is the meaning of the coming from the West [of Bodhidharma]?"[1] Zhaozhou said, "The cypress tree in front of the garden."

[1] "The meaning of the coming from the West": See note 1 of the Chinese text.

Pulling on the thread of causes to each consequence is a fitting approach to finding the path out of the maze into which man is thrown soon after his birth. This thread does more than simply connect

causes and consequences, and instead represents the work of the skies themselves, the flow carried upon the way itself. The consequence is one with the cause, without delimitation between them, only a continuum, and following it, one is bound to arrive at the source of being itself. He may then still be tempted to ask the question: why? To do so is nonetheless to mistake the things of the world for what they represent. Meaning only exists within the mind of man, and therefore there is no meaning outside of the one he creates or determines. When the torrential rains of the fall are poured upon high peaks, a river forms and hastily runs down toward the ocean, and there is no meaning to it. It simply lets itself be pulled down by the weight of the earth, taking the path of least resistance, until it reaches its destination. Likewise, the boar roams the forest littered with amber-colored acorns to feed, responding to its most primal instinct, without thinking of the reason why it does so. Its mind is as clear as the stillest lake. The man whose mind is one with the way of the sky behaves like the river and the creatures roaming the land. Responding naturally to the signs of the heavens as well as those of the world, he is a leaf carried by the wind, taken where he is fated to go, without searching for a purpose before taking the first step, and without trying to give meaning to each of his actions.

What is the meaning of "this" or "that"? The cypress tree in front of the garden. The tree has no purpose and no will. It was a seed that fell down from a nearby tree, or was carried in the beak of a bird or the hand of a man, before taking root in this particular spot. Day after day, it witnessed the rising of the sun in the east and its setting in the west. Year after year, it endured the passing of the seasons, the frost and the parching gusts of air, impassively growing, bearing fruit when the time came and later giving birth to new trees. It sees no east or west, no spring or fall, and yet it is in perfect harmony with the heavenly wheels, having been shaped by them since time immemorial.[136] It is anchored deep into the earth. Its branches are extended toward the great luminary throning in the sky, and yet it knows not what they are, unaffected by this ignorance, simply continuing to follow its nature. Thus is a life in harmony with the way of the sky, without purpose, and yet fruitful; without meaning, and yet attracting followers, guiding them to be one with the way itself.

Case 158 —Yunmen's Discussion Going Off the Tracks —雲門話墮

Source: The Gateless Barrier Case 39.

[136]See: 神保如天. 《従容録通解》。東京：無我山房, 1915. Page 335 (Case 47).

【中】

yún mén yīn sēng wèn guāng míng jì zhào biàn hé shā yí
雲門 因僧問：「光明寂[1] 照遍[2] 河沙[3] 。」一
jù wèi jué mén jù yuē qǐ bú shì zhāng zhuō xiù cái yǔ
句未絕，門 遽曰：「豈不是[4] 張拙秀才[5] 語。」
sēng yún shì mén yún huà duò yě hòu lái sī xīn niān
僧云：「是。」門 云：「話墮也。」後來 死心 拈
yún qiě dào nà lǐ shì zhě sēng huà duò chù
云：「且道：那裏是者僧話墮處。」

[1] 【寂】 [jì]: “silently” / “calmly.”

[2] 【遍】 [biàn]: “everywhere.”

[3] 【河沙】 [hé shā]: Literally, “the sand of the Ganges River.” The sand of the Ganges refers, in the “Diamond Sutra” (金剛經), to things that are immeasurable. Here, it designates the whole of the universe. One may note that the number of stars in the known universe is approximately in the same order of magnitude as all the grains of sand on all the shores of the earth.

[4] 【豈不是】 S:【岂不是】 [qǐ bú shì]: “is it not?”

[5] 【張拙秀才】 [zhāng zhuō xiù cái]: A scholar and poet of the Song dynasty, whose dates of birth and death are unknown. The quote indeed comes from one of his works: the “Poem of the Way of Enlightenment” (悟道詩). The rest of the quoted sentence is as follows: 「光明寂照遍河沙，凡聖含靈共我家；一念不生全體現，六根才動被雲遮；斷除煩惱重增病，趣向真如亦是邪；隨順世緣無罣礙，涅槃生死等空花。」

【日】

こ うんもん ちな そうと こうみょうじゃくしょうへんがしゃ
擧す。雲門、因みに僧問う、「光明寂照遍河沙。」
いっくいまぜっ もんにわ いわあ
一句未だ絶せざるに門遽かに曰く、「豈に
こ ちょうせつしゅうさいご そういわぜもん
是れ張拙秀才の語にあらずや。」僧云く、「是。」門
いわわだ こうらいししんねん いわしば
云く、「話墮せり。」後來、死心拈じて云く、「且ら
いなりここそうわだところ
く道え、那裏か是れ者の僧が話墮の處。」

【E】

A Zen student told Yunmen: “The radiance calmly illuminates the sand of the Ganges River.”[1] Before the sentence was finished, Yunmen asked: “Aren’t these the words of Zhang Zhuo Xiu Cai?”[2] The monk answered: “They are, indeed.” Yunmen said, “You are sidetracked” Later, Sishin talked about this dialogue [to his students] and asked: “Tell me: at what point did this monk go off the track?”

[1] "Ganges River": See note 3 of the Chinese text.

[2] "Zhang Zhuo Xiu Cai": See note 5 of the Chinese text.

To be a poet is to appropriate the world to reveal the truth of the earth and the sky. It is to craft verses that evoke strong feelings in its audience, not bringing them to the cloudy heights of the world, like the verbose discourse of the metaphysician, but rather pulling them back to the craggy face of the earth, to what can be felt through the senses rather than what is pondered by the mind. The elegantly composed verses of the poet are, despite this fact, mere empty shells if the one hearing them lacks the sensibility and the maturity necessary to link their words with a personal experience, incarnating the poem with his flesh, letting himself be guided by it on a journey upon the bare earth, under the sky. The poem may then only offer such a man a false impression, leading him to believe he has understood it, whereas he has only grasped the meaning of its words, not realizing that the essence of poetry does not belong to the realm where meaning is found, the world, but rather where sensation takes its roots, the earth. Great attention should thus be paid when borrowing the verses crafted by more experienced men. Caution is in order when reading the accounts of the poetic experiences of the masters of bygone eras, and one should always remember that these words were only composed to invite us to live such experiences ourselves, and to incite us to bring our own life into words, into the world, so that it may serve as a beacon guiding others on the path, even when they belong to generations that have yet to be born.[137]

One may thus be considered to be side-tracked when speaking words borrowed from others, whether or not they are truly understood, but one may, even so, also be seen as straying from the path by merely considering that words belong to a particular person. To see a rigid frontier separating the self from the other is to fail to see the truth of being, beyond the lens of the world, cutting the whole into a collection of things, a heap of pieces. To think that one can possess words, and that they are inextricably linked to the one who first uttered them is to

[137]See: 山本玄峰. 《無門関提唱》。東京：大法輪閣, 1994: 「『涅槃生死空華に等し』... 結局『光明寂照遍河沙』という言葉は内容は素晴らしい内容だが、それは張拙秀才が云うたという事になれば、云うた人は張拙秀才で自分とは関係がない。自分はそれのせいぜい文字上の、観念的な事だけしかわかってない、自分自身が本当にこの『光明寂照遍河沙』という、自分がそういう境界であって云うたのならば、これは古人が云った言葉であっても、その時には、自分の語となっておるから主体性がある。... これが非常に大事なことだ。趙州が『無』と云ったとか、雲門が『日々是好日』と云ったとか、そのようなことをいくら知っておっても、自分の境界になっておらなかったら、いくら『無』と云ってもそれは趙州の無字であって、自分の無字ではないのじゃ。かつて黄檗禅師は『汝等諸人悉く是れ噇酒糟の漢』と。お前たちはみな酒の糟を食うておるような奴だ。」

be deluded, to be a slave of the things of the world, a prisoner of words and characters. Since the essence of the poetic is to be found upon the bare earth, where there is no thing, no word, and no self, how ridiculous it is to attribute to a person the merit of any array of words depicting an experience of the truth of the earth and the sky. Each poem, each verse, is composed by the way of the sky, seeping into the world through the agency of man, who is a mere instrument in its composition, rather than its source. And yet, the dweller of the world should for all that prefer the personal experience rather than the account of the other, until he can directly perceive the fallacy of the opposition between the two.

The radiance calmly illuminates the entire universe, but few eyes are therefore able to clearly witness its faint but all-pervading glow. We are all bright torches shining through the darkness of the night, lighting the piece of the world in which we stand, but this brilliance that reveals the things in our vicinity also plunges into deeper darkness the faint glow of the heavens, the inconspicuous essence that is so omnipresent that it is seldom seen. It is only when this torch is extinguished that the calm radiance may appear, also leading to a fading away of all the frontiers separating the things found upon the earth and in the sky. Then, one may finally realize that he is the gentle glow of the heavens itself, pervading all, and yet seldom recognized.

Case 159 —Young Bodhisattvas, Come and Eat —菩薩子吃飯來

Source: The Blue Cliff Record Case 74.

【中】

jǔ jīn niú hé shàng měi zhì zhāi shí zì jiāng fàn tǒng yú sēng
舉。金牛和尚，每至齋[1]時，自將飯桶，於僧
táng qián zuò wǔ hē hē dà xiào yún pú sà zī chī fàn lái xuě dòu
堂前作舞，呵呵大笑云：「菩薩子[2]喫飯來。」雪竇
yún suī rán rú cī jīn niú bú shì hǎo xīn sēng wèn cháng qìng gū
云：「雖然如此，金牛不是好心[3]。」僧問長慶：「古
rén dào pú sà zī chī fàn lái yì zhī rú hé qìng yún dà
人道：『菩薩子喫飯來。』意旨如何。」慶云：「大
sì yīn zhāi qìng zàn
似因齋慶讚[4]。」

[1] 【齋】 [zhāi]: “a vegetarian meal served at a Buddhist monastery.”

[2] 【菩薩】 [pú sà]: “bodhisattva.”

[3] 【好心】 [hǎo xīn]: “to show kindness” / “to act with good intentions.”

[4] 【大似因齋慶讚】 [dà sì yīn zhāi qìng zàn]: The use of the word 因 [yīn] here leaves some space for different interpretations. The thanksgiving that is mentioned is causally linked to the meal, but the nature of this relationship can be interpreted in different ways: "It is like giving thanks for the meal," " ... to the meal," "... according to the meal," (See the Japanese version), or "... when eating a meal" (See: 吳平。《新譯碧巖集》。台北：三民書局股份有限公司, 2005. Page 186: 「就像用齋的時候唱讚歌。」). This ambiguity contributes to the beauty of this case.

【日】

舉す。金牛和尚、齋時に至る毎に、自ら飯桶を將て僧堂の前に舞を作し、呵呵大笑して云く、「菩薩子、飯を喫し來たれと。」雪竇云く、「此の如くなりと雖然も、金牛は是れ好心ならず。」僧、長慶に問う、「古人道く、菩薩子、飯を喫し來たれとは、意旨如何。」慶云く、「齋に因って慶讚するに大いに似たり。」

【E】

At the time of each meal, Master Jinniu would himself bring the rice bucket and, when at the entrance of the hall, he would dance there while laughing loudly and say: "Young Bodhisattvas, come and eat your rice!" (Xuedou said, "Even though he behaved that way, Jinniu was not being kind.") A monk asked Changching: "A man of the old days said: 'Young Bodhisattvas, come and eat rice.' What does it mean?" Changching said, "It is like praising and giving thanks for the rice."[1]

[1] "Like praising and giving thanks for the rice": See note 4 of the Chinese text.

Under the impulse of the brilliant star circling the azure dome encompassing the earth, marking the pace of the days, the seeds buried deep in the watery paddies patiently grow, unhurriedly emerging from the soil as jade-colored shoots turned toward the source of heavenly radiance.

In their midst, they themselves nurture the growth of the next generation of seeds, pearly white grains, light woven with earth and air to form the building blocks of life itself, some of which will give birth to other ears, but many of which will rather satiate the hunger of the birds reigning in the sky or the hunger of the men who planted them and nurtured their growth. Each day, man survives through the sacrifice of other living beings, while the one whose compassion toward them is boundless is condemned to perish, unless he would exclusively feed himself from the cadavers of those who have naturally exhausted their strength, something rather improbable. Each grain of rice we ingest is a few more instants of life offered to us upon the face of the earth, rather than under it. Each meal is another day contemplating the wonders of the heavens and the beauty of our world, confidently walking on the path, wholeheartedly embracing the way, eagerly trying to see our true face. This is why each meal should be a frightful event, a reminder of the terrible price paid by life itself, the great efforts of the dead sacrificed so that we may live. With each bite, we should perhaps ask ourselves whether we are worthy or not of this day we spend upon the earth. With each meal, we should perhaps make amends for our shortcomings and see a new resoluteness emerge within our hearts, so that we would not let this sacrifice be wasted on trivialities and vain ambitions. When we enter the dining hall, and are greeted with praise by someone who has seen his own face, saying: "Come and eat your meal, oh you who are destined to become awakened ones!" We may feel ourselves humbled, considering our own shortcomings, hearing the sharpest rebuke in these sweet words of praise.

Consciousness of the sacrifice that results in our existence and our perduring upon the earth nonetheless does not preclude mirth associated with the extension of our days. The mind is like the way of the sky itself, able to harbor opposites in perfect harmony, to host the contradictory elements of the world, reconciling them while preserving their distinctiveness. Our heart may be filled with awe in front of the responsibility incumbent upon us, and yet it may also be replete with merriment and joy, as we contemplate our own being, the bliss of experiencing the present instant, here on earth, knowing that we shall soon be devoured by the ground. Our body may be dancing and mourning, while our lips may sing praises and bitter rebukes in unison. To truly honor the sacrifice of life performed for our perpetuation, one should, however, cease to see oneself as standing out from the rest of life, or from the entirety of the heavens themselves. The awakening comes when remorse can no longer be distinguished from mirth, when the praises and the rebukes are embraced together and reconciled, leaving no trace behind, no-thing. The one who eats is then one with what is eaten. The rice itself can be praised. One can give thanks to the bucket holding it, and one shall hear the reply that it gives, resonating like a drum when it has been emptied, as a celebration of the transcendence of

life and death, a glorification of being itself.

Case 160 —What a Fox-Spirit —這野狐精

Source: The Blue Cliff Record Case 93.

【中】

jǔ sēng wèn dà guāng cháng qìng dào yīn zhāi qìng zàn yì
舉。僧問大光：「長慶道：『因齋慶讚[1]』，意
zhǐ rú hé dà guāng zuò wǔ sēng lǐ bài guāng yún jiàn gè shén
旨如何。」大光作舞。僧禮拜，光云：「見箇什
me biàn lǐ bài sēng zuò wǔ guāng yún zhè yě hú jīng
麼便禮拜。」僧作舞，光云：「這野狐精[2]。」

[1] 【因齋慶讚】 [yīn zhāi qìng zàn]: See the fourth note in the previous case, Blue Cliff Record 74.

[2] 【野狐精】 [yě hú jīng]: "fox-spirit." The term here refers to the so-called "Fox-Zen" (野狐禪), linked to the second case of the Gateless Barrier, in which a wild fox plays the central part. The fox-spirit here designates someone who imitates the behavior of a Zen master, without understanding it.

【日】

こ そう たいこう と ちょうけいわ さい よ
舉す。僧、大光に問う、「長慶道く、齋に因っ
けいさん い し いかん たいこう まい な そう らい
て慶讚すと。意旨如何。」大光、舞を作す。僧、禮
はい こういわ こ なに み すなわ らいはい
拜す。光云く、「箇の什麼を見てか、便ち禮拜す
そう まい な こういわ こ や こぜい
る。」僧、舞を作す。光云く、「這の野狐精。」

【E】

A monk asked Daguang: "Changching said, 'It is like praising and giving thanks for the rice'[1] What did he mean?" Daguang danced. The monk made a deep bow. Daguang said, "What did you see that makes you bow like that?" The monk danced. Daguang said, "What a fox spirit!"[2]

[1] See Blue Cliff Record Case 74.

[2] "Fox": See note 2 of the Chinese text.

Gratefulness is a state of mind, detached from any notion of cause and consequence. It can be reached without the need for one to direct it toward a precise thing. One can be grateful for a meal, because of a meal, or even toward a meal itself. It expresses the feeling that one is not necessarily deserving of one's own condition, of the favors he enjoys, showing a willingness to give back what one has received, and thereby contributing to the harmony of all that is. With no one to thank and nothing to pay homage to, one may therefore express gratitude with one's limbs rather than with one's tongue, with a dance rather than with words, thereby avoiding the pitfalls of the world, inappropriate and deceitful language. He rather lets his entire body be a sign of mirth, one that is addressed to everyone and no one, one whose meaning is crystal-clear and yet cannot be pinpointed, exhibiting a property of the heavens themselves, reflecting their mysterious nature.

The man of the world is thus naturally perplexed by a display of speechless joy without identifiable cause or direction. He seeks an answer. He searches for an explanation, a reason that would justify such peculiar behavior, because he cannot envision that there are no reasons for what does not belong to his world. The leaves dance with the wind, and the waves chant their endless mantra as they collide with the sand and the rocks of the shores, but there are no reasons explaining these performances, nor any audience toward which they would be directed. They just are. A man who lives on the edge separating the earth and the world may therefore let words flow out of his mouth, without thought, without calculation, words of gratitude that will be interpreted by those hearing them, with the interpreters endlessly losing themselves in vain debates, while they were only audible seeds thrown into the air, as an expression of the joy of simply being, here and now. True gratitude comes from a clear view of the nature of the heavens, being one with the ear of rice growing in the paddy field, one with the sun fostering its growth, one with the brethren eating the meal prepared with it, aware of their shared essence, aware that this consciousness is a mere illusion, an ec-stasy allowing us to see that there is no-thing there, and thus only no-thing to be grateful for, and no-thing that can express gratitude.

Words are often difficult to interpret, and one can never be certain of sharing the same understanding as the one who uttered them. Signs expressed without words, such as with the body itself, are laden with an even greater range of meanings, which are even harder to ascertain, and this constitutes the greatest strength of such signs, as they embody the ambiguity inherent in the frontier separating earth from world, and the nature of man himself, torn between these two realms and yet reconciling them both. The danger of such earthly language is nonetheless that it is extremely easy to imitate, even without having the slightest idea of what it represents, and it would be almost impossible to point out this mistake

without making use of words, the language of the world. One's practice may then be like the training of a parrot, mimicking a voice perfectly, without understanding a single word, without even knowing that they are more than a mere sound, more than a feeble tremor of the heavenly ether. This is why it would be cruel for a man of the way to remain silent while witnessing such foolishness. Such a man must courageously wade through the mud of the world, soiling his mouth with improper words, to allow others to see the great light, to cease to be monkeys on the earth and parrots in the sky, to rather be men, joining earth and world, gathering the ground and the heights, incarnating the harmony of these realms with their flesh and their mind.

Case 161 —As Small as a Grain of Rice —如粟米粒大

Source: The Blue Cliff Record Case 5.

【中】

jǔ xuě fēng shì zhòng yún jìn dà dì cuō lái rú sù mǐ
舉。雪峯 示眾云：「盡大地撮[1] 來，如粟米[2]
lì dà pāo xiàng miàn qián qī tǒng bú huì dǎ gǔ pǔ qǐng kàn
粒大。抛[3] 向面前，漆桶[4] 不會。打鼓，普請看。」

[1] 【撮】 [cuō]: "to pick with one's fingertips."

[2] 【粟米】 [sù mǐ]: "grain [of a crop]."

[3] 【抛】 S:【抛】 [pāo]: "to throw"/ "to toss."

[4] 【漆桶】 [qī tǒng]: "a [black] lacquer bucket." By extension, also can designate delusions and attachments. (See: 新村出。《広辞苑第七版》。東京：岩波書店, 2018: 「漆桶しっつう（「うるしを入れた桶」の意から）真っ黒で何も分からないこと。転じて、妄想や執着。また、仏法に暗い僧。」)

【日】

こ せっぽう しゅ しめ いわ じん だいち つま
舉す。雪峰、衆に示して云く、「盡大地撮み
あぐ あわつぶほど おお めんぜん ほうりだ
來れば、粟米粒如の大きさなり。面前に抛向す
しっつう え たいこう ふしん
も、漆桶にして會せざらん。鼓を打って普請し
み
看よと。」

【E】

Xuefeng, instructing the assembly, said, "You pick up the entire earth with three fingers, and it's the size of a grain of rice. Someone throws it in front of you, and it is as if it were in a black lacquer bucket, and one does not recognize it anymore. Beat the drum! Everyone, come to look for it!"

The difference between the sun and a grain of sand can only be determined by the mind. The large and the small, the light and the heavy, these are our creations, whereas the heavens know no size or weight, only being as they are, without knowledge or measure. Man is the measure of all things, and outside of his mind, there is only the immeasurable. Further than this, on the bare earth, when the frontiers of man's world have been crossed, it is not only quantities and qualities that vanish, but even all things themselves, as such, as countable entities, graspable objects, as the contours defining them are traced by the chisel of our perception and the knife of our reason. There is no part of the earth, and there is not even a whole that exists as such. The totality it forms is indeed not a "thing," as "things" cannot pass the threshold leading out of our mind, out of our world. The grain of sand that we pick up with our fingers is not separated from what is around it. Invisible forces bind this grain of sand with all its surroundings, up to the entirety of the heavens. It is not made of particles clearly localized at one spot in the cosmos, nor can one trace an absolute boundary defining where it begins and where it ends. Its substance indeed is like a wave progressively fading away, until we cannot perceive it, leaving us unable to determine its end, forcing us to trace arbitrary lines.

When we pick up a grain of sand with our fingers, we therefore pick up the entire earth, and we pull the totality of the heavens. Our eyes may only perceive a single grain of sand, but when the mind is clear of all things, when our heart is one with the way of the sky, we may see all that *is* through this minuscule piece of matter, see the whole rather than the parts, the earth and the sky rather than our world. Once it is seen clearly, then comes the realization of the vacuity of the whole of being, of the celestial realm and all that it encompasses. It indeed represents the last thing, the greatest object that can be fathomed, but such a thing remains like an individual grain of sand, that is, a mirage created by our mind, veiling the truth of being to render it graspable by our mind, but not reflecting its true nature. This is when the grain can be cast away in the darkness, and with it the entire earth and sky. The last thing can be thrown into the chasm, so that no-thing will be seen, and everything will appear in its truth. Blindness to all things is indeed a prerequisite to the perception of the truth of being, the essence

of the sky. The earth, the world, and the skies are left unchanged, not experiencing the slightest transformation, with every single thing of the world in its place, but with a blindfold upon his eyes, man can then perceive "no-thing" with his other senses, that is, what can be experienced but not recognized, what can snatch up one's heart but cannot be put into words. One will nonetheless feel compelled to share this experience, and he will be eager to invite his brethren to share this newfound wealth that comes as the result of having thrown all things away. Speechless, without tongue or lips, without words or concepts, he can only trigger a wave in the air filling the sky, vigorously beating the drum before him, with its thundering sound calling for all to come and look for it, to look for no-thing!

Case 162 —A Fence of Peonies —花藥欄

Source: The Blue Cliff Record Case 39.

【中】

jǔ sēng wèn yún mén rú hé shì qīng jìng fǎ shēn mén
舉。僧問雲門：「如何是清淨法身[1]。」門
yún huā yào lán sēng yún biàn rèn me qù shí rú hé mén
云：「花藥[2]欄[3]。」僧云：「便恁麼去時如何。」門
yún jīn máo shī zi
云：「金毛獅子。」

[1] 【法身】 [fǎ shēn]: "the Dharma body." A translation of the Sanskrit word "dharmakāya" (धर्म काय). One of the "three bodies" of a Buddha in Mahāyāna Buddhism. It may be seen as the essence of the whole of nature.

[2] 【花藥】 S:【花药】 [huā yào]: "Chinese peony" (Paeonia lactiflora).

[3] 【欄】 S:【栏】 [lán]: "a fence."

【日】

こ そう うんもん と いか こ せいじょう
舉す。僧、雲門に問う、「如何なるか是れ清淨
ほっしん もんいわ か やくらん そういわ すなわ さよう
法身。」門云く、「花藥欄。」僧云く、「便ち恁麼に
さ とき いかん もんいわ きんもう しし
し去る時、如何。」門云く、「金毛の獅子。」

【E】

A monk asked Yunmen: "What is the pure Dharma-body?"[1] Yunmen said, "A fence of peonies"[2] The monk said,

"What if one goes that way?" Yunmen said, "A golden-haired lion."

[1] "Dharma-body": See note 1 of the Chinese text.

[2] "A fence of peonies": It has been suggested that this fence was one surrounding latrines.

Since time immemorial, men have forged names to attempt to represent the foundation of being itself, sometimes seen as the first cause or the destiny of all that *is*, crafting idols as central pillars of their world so that we all may finally have somewhere to direct our prayers, someone to address our petitions, or a direction to focus our attention when we desperately seek for the meaning of our existence or simply attempt to see our own nature. With great care, our forefathers carved up these idols out of the most elegant material, employing the most skilled artists, and yet the incredible beauty of these creations only serves to mask the ugly truth lying beyond them, their falsehood, deceiving the heart of man and preventing him from facing the truth he so desperately seeks.

What is the "pure essence of being" then? It is a fence of peonies surrounding a latrine. The flowers are a masterwork of nature and, likewise, the concept of this "essence" is a magnificently crafted creation of man exalted in the midst of his world, attracting the eyes of passers-by and tickling their nose with a subtle fragrance drawing smiles upon their faces as their eyes feast upon the palette of colors it displays for all to see. This performance seizing the senses of man and delighting his heart still also deceives him. It simply conceals the true nature of this place, which is adorned with flowers, but whose purpose and use is to receive the excretions of the dwellers of this part of the earth, the colorful living things only masking the soiled apparatus built for this purpose, and the delightful scent only covering the stench of the products of man's willingness to extend his days upon the face of the earth. The holy creations of man, the concepts he forged with his tongue and his quill, are like this fence, separating the truth from a caricature of it, leading men to mistake one for the other. Truth is yet not to be found in the sight of colors or the smelling of a fragrance, but rather within ourselves. Seeing our own nature indeed implies seeing what we are, in all our ugliness as well as in all our beauty, transcending both.[138] We

[138] See: Yamada, Kou'un, *Hekiganroku (Blue Cliff Record)* [Unpublished manuscript]: "But, recall the line from the sutra quoted above: 'A person who takes colors to see the self or sounds to find the self is practicing a heretical way. That person will never be able to see the Tathagata.'" Original Japanese: 「しかし『色を以て我を見、音声を以て我を求むれば、この人は邪道を行ず、如来を見奉ること能わず』とお経にある通り」From: 山田耕雲。《碧岩集提唱山田耕雲》。[Unpublished manuscript].

should thus try to peer beyond the words, to pierce through the concepts, seeing through their deceitful nature. We should rather take refuge in a direct experience, realizing that we are what we seek, and that the most common of our daily activities are manifestations of it, the answer that we waited for so long. The latrine may then become our temple. Each excretion may be a mystical experience, revealing our own nature as we feel a part of ourselves offered back to the earth, showing us what we are, what all things are, and then the horrible stench of this place concealed from the eyes of others will cease to be distinguishable from the delightful fragrance of the peonies. The ugliness of this solitary act, performed away from the gaze of our beloved ones, will then vanish, and this deed will appear as beautiful as the vividly colored fence, a celebration of life and being. The holy then merges with the profane, and the representation is one with what it designates. After such a realization, one may go out in the world with a clear mind, having in the latrine relieved himself of all the things that burdened him, having seen his own face inside it. Having forgotten shame and impurity, he can then proudly return to join his brethren, like a golden-haired lion, fearless, shameless, and thoughtless, letting his roar resonate through the streets, sharing with a shout the truth he now embodies.

Case 163 —Heshan's Beat the Drum —禾山解打鼓

Source: The Blue Cliff Record Case 44.

【中】

jǔ hé shān chuí yǔ yún xí xué wèi zhī wén jué xué wèi zhī lín
舉。禾山垂語云：「習學謂之聞，絕學謂之隣。
guò cǐ èr zhě shì wéi zhēn guò sēng chū wèn rú hé shì zhēn guò
過此二者，是為真過。」僧出問：「如何是真過。」
shān yún jiě dǎ gǔ yòu wèn rú hé shì zhēn dì shān
山云：「解打鼓。」又問：「如何是真諦[1]。」山
yún jiě dǎ gǔ yòu wèn jí xīn jí fó jí bù wèn rú hé
云：「解打鼓。」又問：「即心即佛[2]即不問，如何
shì fēi xīn fēi fó shān yún jiě dǎ gǔ yòu wèn xiàngshàng
是非心非佛[3]。」山云：「解打鼓。」又問：「向上
rén lái shí rú hé jiě shān yún jiě dǎ gǔ
人來時如何接。」山云：「解打鼓。」

[1] 【真諦】 S:【真谛】 [zhēn dì]: "the real essential truth," opposed to the "common essential truth" (俗諦). Both are called "the two essential truths" (二諦). From the Sanskrit "Satya" (सत्य), meaning "truth."

[2] See case 84 (case 30 of the Gateless Barrier), centered around this phrase.

[3] See case 194 (case 33 of the Gateless Barrier), centered around this phrase.

【日】

舉す。禾山垂語して云く、「修學、之を聞と謂い、絶學、之を隣と謂う。此の二つを過ぐる者、是を眞過と爲す。」僧出でて問う、「如何なるか是れ眞過。」山云く、「解く鼓を打つ。」又た問う、「如何なるか是れ眞諦。」山云く、「解く鼓を打つ。」又た問う、「即心即佛は即ち問わず、如何なるか是れ非心非佛。」山云く、「解く鼓を打つ。」又た問う、「向上の人來たる時、如何にか接する。」山云く、「解く鼓を打つ。」

【E】

Heshan, giving instruction, said, “To study and to learn, this may be called ‘hearing.’ To complete one’s study, this may be called ‘being close.’ When one has passed through these two, it can be considered a true passing.” A monk stepped forward and asked: “What is the ‘true passing’?” Heshan said, “Beat the drum!” He asked again: “What is the fundamental truth?” Heshan said, “Beat the drum!” He asked again: “I do not ask about [the sentence] ‘the mind is Buddha,’[1] but what does ‘neither mind nor Buddha’[2] mean?” Heshan said, “Beat the drum!” He asked once more: “When a man of advanced practice on his way up [to Nirvana] comes here, how should he be received?” Heshan said, “Beat the drum!”

[1] See case 84 (case 30 of the Gateless Barrier), centered around this phrase.

[2] See case 194 (case 33 of the Gateless Barrier), centered around this phrase.

Our forefathers have already walked most of the path upon which we advance during the course of our lives. Their experiences have become the point of origin and the source of numerous parts of our world, as these experiences were turned into words and books, pointing out the way to go, so that we may not only catch up with them but also continue their endeavor, reaching places yet to be discovered. Studying the knowledge of the world is hearing the voices of the past, warning us of dangers and inviting us to follow the clues they left to help us find the way. There nonetheless comes a point when this knowledge of the world teaches about the boundaries, the limitations of this very world. We must first realize the nature of this realm into which we were all thrown soon after our coming to life, realizing that what we see around us is largely a construction of our mind, a product of the work of our ancestors and brethren, showing us the appearance of things, but concealing their substance, which can only appear when one is ready to shatter these things, to crush them to smithereens. When the stick is in someone's hand, and he stands ready to strike at the object ahead, he has completed his study. He then no longer has need of the knowledge of the world for his instruction, to guide him on the path. He stands upon the threshold of the world, ready to pass over, toward the unknown.

The call has been heeded, and the goal is clear. The things' substance is about to be unveiled. The mouth is closed, and the tongue stays still, while the hand firmly holds the instrument of this revelation. The arm moves swiftly, without the slightest trace of wavering, and it violently strikes the object in front of him, causing it to tremble while a loud rumble echoes throughout the air, reaching the ears of all those present in its vicinity. The thing reveals itself to be a drum, and what is heard is the sound of the emptiness at its heart. Skin and earth form its outer shell, but inside lies nothing, and the interaction between the trembling shell and this empty expanse brings forth this sound passing through the sky, broadcasting the presence of nothingness itself in the midst of this thing. The drum is a thing of the world, bearing a name and having a use in it. It is also shaped with the earth, an animal hide stretched upon a vessel of wood or clay. Its core, and what gives it its property as an instrument used for calling others or striking awe in their heart is nonetheless the emptiness concealed by its outward appearance. Hearing this sound, one may hear the nature of all the other things that surround him. The sound of the drum allows him to gather all the things of the world to him.[139] The things themselves heed the calling of the drum, and the drummer finally perceives the underlying unicity of these things. Further than this, he realizes that they are all like the drum itself, a cloak covering no-thing-ness, a skin covering an emptiness that

[139]See: 吳平。《新譯碧巖集》。台北：三民書局股份有限公司, 2005. :「開示真正的解脫只在於領會此一包含所有事實而始終同一之『解打鼓』。或謂『解打鼓』，即響在後面之意，亦即寓玄旨於言外之意。」

pervades all that is, including himself.

The drummer is thus himself a drum, a skin that clothes emptiness itself, and now his voice resounds like its single note, as there is only one thing that he has to say. There is only silence, interrupted by the beating of the drum, calling for an assembly, ordering all the men of the world to come and hear what being is, through this wave resounding throughout the heavens and into their ears, into their minds. With his stick, he may begin to strike those who approach him, to make the emptiness inside them be heard and show them their own nature. A slap on the face and one's ego may then be shattered to pieces, leaving no-thing in its stead, and when every single thing of the world has been shattered, when every man will have heard the sound of his heart, then they can all cross together, shedding their skin away, smashing the drums to dust, and finally enter the place where there is only no-thing, while the sound of the drum continues to echo into the future, ready to be heard by those who have yet to be born.

Case 164 —Zhaozhou's Robe —趙州布衫

Source: The Blue Cliff Record Case 45.

【中】

jǔ sēng wèn zhào zhōu wàn fǎ guī yī yī guī hé chù zhōu
舉。僧問趙州：「萬法歸一，一歸何處。」州
yún wǒ zài qīng zhōu zuò yì lǐng bù shān zhòng qī jīn
云：「我在青州作一領布衫，重七斤。」

【日】

こ そう じょうしゅう と まんぽう いち き
舉す。僧、趙州に問う、「萬法は一に歸す、
いち いずこ き しゅういわ わがせいしゅう あ
一は何處にか歸する。」州云く、「我青州に在り
いちりょう ふ さん つく おも ななきん
て、一領の布衫を作る。重きこと七斤。」

【E】

A monk asked Zhaozhou: "The ten thousand things come down to one. What does the one come down to?" Zhaozhou said, "When I was living in the Qing province, I made a robe, which weighed seven pounds."

The way of the sky gave birth to life, to man, and to his world. This world began with a foundation stone, a single thing, then shattered into a myriad of pieces, the things that are now around us.[140] The man of the world furthers its building up, polishing these shards of the "one thing," continuing to crush them into smaller pieces, then used to form a mosaic expressing the fruit of his experiences and his imagination. This work allows mankind to hold sway over the rest of life, and over portions of the earth and the sky, as man dodges all the assaults upon his life, ensures the appropriation of the resources he needs for the perpetuation of his species, and develops his knowledge and mastery over nature itself.

The man of the way, on the other hand, walks backward on the path taken by the men of the world. He begins by mending the pieces of the earth and the sky. He discards the pernicious illusions made into things by his brethren, things that have no ground in the earth. He sees through the pieces, perceiving that they are but a broken image of the oneness of nature, and he thus labors industriously to reveal what is shared by all things, arraying the shards like a gigantic puzzle, showing how they all fit into one another, forming a single picture. Once all the pieces have found their place, and the whole image can finally be contemplated, then comes the inevitable question: what then? When there is only one thing in front of us, this is when the thingness of the thing can be perceived. When the world has been reduced to its foundation stone, the essence of the world can then be perceived, as well as the reason why it was laid in the first place. In order for this totality of the earth and the sky to be perceived, there nonetheless needs to be another thing. One may contemplate the entirety of the earth and the sky as a single thing, a single object, but he himself represents something even more primordial, something that reveals itself to be what supports the very foundation stone of the world: his self, the subject that observes the object. He is the source from which the first thing arises. He is the wellspring of things, as well as the builder of the world. Without man, there is nothing to grasp, nothing to see, and nothing to perceive or understand. If he sees his own true face, he can see where he himself comes from, as clear as the air filling the celestial vault. If someone then asks him what he saw, what is the ultimate source of all things, how will he answer? Rather than misusing words to talk about what cannot be described with words, he may simply appeal to one's personal experience of creation, of the witnessing of the emergence of a thing of the world.

[140] See this sentence from Laozi's Dao De Jing: "The way produced one; one produced two; two produced three; three produced the myriad of things. The ten thousand things leave behind them the Obscurity and go forward to embrace the Brightness as they are harmonized by the blending of their flux." Original Chinese text: 「道生一，一生二，二生三，三生萬物。萬物負陰而抱陽，沖氣以為和。」 From: 阿部吉雄。《新釈漢文大系〈7〉老子荘子上巻》。東京：明治書院, 1966. Pages 78–79 (Chapter 42).

When one creates something —a garment, for example —one first gathers fibers made of plants or the hairs of animals. One then cleans and turns them into threads, and weaves them into cloth, before cutting and sewing it to adapt it to the shape of a particular body. A new thing is created, in the world, but nothing has been created upon the earth. Man has only transformed elements found in nature. Feeling the end product in his hands, its heaviness represents the same weight as that of the pieces of earth he used to create it. His creation is only the result of a skillful rearrangement, like many other things found in his world. The ten thousand things likewise all come down to one, without anything having been created outside of man's consciousness, but this one thing, encompassing the entirety of the skies, is in its substance not a creation of man. We only turned what was no-thing into a thing, assigning a label, a name, to what was already there before us. All things of the world indeed emerge from no-thing-ness, including ourselves. We rose out of the place where there is not a single thing, and we then took upon ourselves the task of dividing the first thing into a multitude, often failing to see that we are the foundation of our own world. We are the first thing and the last, what stands out of the all-pervading no-thing-ness, the whole of being itself. Our bodies were patiently woven by nature like a garment, using air, earth, and water, and our consciousness emerged as the result of this extremely intricate work of art. We nonetheless remain a sack of air, earth, and water, and nothing new was created when we were born. We remain no-thing-ness incarnate, like any other thing of our world. Nothing emerged, and nothing disappeared. There is only no-thing-ness cloaked in a heavy cloth of illusions.

Case 165 —The Dust Dust Samadhi —塵塵三昧

Source: The Blue Cliff Record Case 50.

This case is identical to the Book of Serenity, case 99.

【中】

jǔ sēng wèn yún mén rú hé shì chén chén sān mèi mén
舉。僧問雲門：「如何是塵塵三昧[1]。」門
yún bō lǐ fàn tǒng lǐ shuǐ
云：「鉢裏飯，桶裏水。」

[1] 【塵塵三昧】[chén chén sān mèi]: "dust dust samadhi." The dust refers to the things of the world, the objects of our perception and thought, and the attachments linked to them. The "dust dust samadhi" is an enlightenment triggered by an exposition to the dust of the world. The smallest and most insignificant thing around us may indeed become the source of a complete liberation from the yoke of the world.

【日】

舉(こ)す。僧(そう)、雲門(うんもん)に問(と)う、「如何(いか)なるか是(こ)れ塵塵(じんじん)三昧(ざんまい)。」門云(もんいわ)く、「鉢(はつ)の裏(なか)の飯(めし)、桶(つう)の裏(なか)の水(みず)。」

【E】

A monk asked Yunmen: "What is the dust-dust samadhi?"[1] Yunmen said, "Rice in the bowl; water in the bucket."

[1] "Dust-dust Samadhi": See note 1 of the Chinese text.

Our bodies are a bottomless vessels with six openings through which a continuous flow passes as long as we are awake, the five senses and our consciousness, whereas during our sleep our consciousness, our imagination, become the sole source of a similar torrent of haphazardly conflated feelings and thoughts. Each thing belonging to our world, from the tiniest speck of dust to the most gigantic star adorning the heavens, is susceptible to becoming the arrowhead that will pierce through our mind and break our perception of this world, revealing what was too familiar to us to be seen. Our life is paced by the use we make of the things around us. The dust covering the floor is swiftly swept away so that the pristine nature of the marble it is made of can be displayed for all to see. The cup is filled with water when one is thirsty, and put away once empty. The plate receives the meal when it is time to eat, and it is stored out of sight once one is satiated. We spend our days busying ourselves with the affairs of the world, often with strenuous work, for our survival and prosperity, with leisure and entertainment for our own pleasure, but we remain with few occasions to contemplate the nature of these things, to ponder their place in our existence as well as in the whole of nature. Each single one of these things nonetheless holds the potential to change our existence, to radically alter the course of our lives, if only we seize the chance to attentively observe them, letting them speak to us, rather than simply be used by our hands.

Each impression left upon our senses by the things of the world is thus an opportunity presented to us to perceive the truth of being. Each speck of dust leaving an imprint upon our body is the most potent medicine, the most powerful elixir, able to awaken anyone plunged in the deepest sleep, vigorously pulling him out of the land of illusions and

throwing him into the naked truth of nature, into the brightest light that illuminates every corner of his heart and his world. Each thing around him is an opening through which he can be hurled headlong, no matter its size or what it is made of, and once he has passed through, he discovers that he is in the very same place, but that all is now seen in a new light. The world becomes more than a heap of things that can be useful to him. It also displays an inconspicuous and yet magnificently harmonious order, finally seen for the first time. The meal in the plate; the water in the cup. Such scenes of life represent the most natural things, things being where they should be. Every single thing now appears in its place, with the rest of the universe pointing to it, supporting it, and guiding it as it is carried upon the way of the sky. Seeing the water in the bowl, one may then see how it got there, the rain poured by the clouds upon the snowy peaks of the mountains and turned into rivers before being diverted to a city and a maze of pipes, before falling into this glass vessel. One may also see where it will go, passing through our throat, becoming part of our flesh, before it runs down another set of tubes and then reaches the sea, and the work of the sun and the winds once again brings it up to form clouds. Seeing some rice in a bowl, one may see the radiance of our blazing star showering the muddy ground littered with seeds, soon sprouting from the earth and extending their leaves toward the sky, as if thanking the source of their growth, before they are cut down with steel tools, deprived of their grains, cleaned and gathered before they are cooked with steam, finally brought onto the plate from which men will get their daily sustenance. Entering their belly, they will then be digested to feed the fire of life burning within their skin, while a large part of it will be offered back to the earth, fertilizing the soil and fostering the growth of the crops of the next seasons. When one is awake, and the order of nature is clearly seen, all questions then vanish, and all thoughts are scattered like the morning mist after dawn. Each speck of dust becomes the celestial vault itself, and the largest celestial bodies appear no greater than a grain of sand, as they all represent the perfection of the order of nature, without any separation between them, like a whirlwind the size of the universe itself.

Case 166 —Fengxue's Speck of Dust —風穴一塵

Source: The Blue Cliff Record Case 61.

This case is identical to the Book of Serenity, case 34.

【中】

jǔ fēng xué chuí yǔ yún ruò lì yì chén jiā guó xīng shèng bú
舉。風穴垂語云：「若立一塵，家國興盛；不

lì yì chén jiā guó sàng wáng xuě dòu niān zhǔ zhàng yún huán yǒu tóng shēng
立一塵，家國喪亡。」雪竇拈拄杖云：「還有同生
tóng sǐ di nà sēng ma
同死底[1] 衲僧[2] 麼。」

[1] 【底】 [di]: Equivalent to the modern Chinese particle 的 .

[2] 【衲僧】 [nà sēng]: “a monk.”

【日】

こ ふけつ すいご いわ も いちじん た
擧す。風穴垂語して云く、「若し一塵を立つ
か こくこうせい いちじん た か こくそう
れば、家國興盛し、一塵を立てざれば、家國喪
ぼう せっちょう しゅじょう とりあ いわ は どうしょうどうし
亡す。」雪竇、拄杖を拈げて云く、「還た同生同死
てい のうそう
底の衲僧ありや。」

【E】

Fengxue, giving instruction, said, “If one raises a speck of dust, one’s house and nation prosper. If one does not raise a speck of dust, one’s house and nation perish.” (Xuedou held up his staff and said, “Is there still any monk who lives and dies in accordance with this?”)

The world in which man is thrown at birth is the source of his power over earth and sky. In his youth, he is taught how to appropriate the innumerable things built by his forefathers, so that he may also contribute in the future to its building. Tools are put in his hands, and he is told: “The earth is your property! The sky is your birthright! Shape them according to your wishes!” He receives comprehensive instruction, teaching him to discern the boundaries between things, their names, and their use, without questioning their nature, without doubting the soundness of the foundation of this world. These things become all that he knows, his entire world, and it is through their use that he writes the story of his own existence, creating new things, undertaking new tasks, accomplishing what has never been done before for his house, his people, or his country. Lands and empires thus rise and prosper, through the discrimination between parts of the earth and sky that enables their use, and through the birth of new ideas, the creation of new objects, and the

establishment of new institutions. The entirety of this world rests entirely on the cutting out of the whole of nature into arbitrary things, graspable by the hands and the mind of man. Without the dagger of perception, the sword of reason, none of this would be possible. Without "this" and "that," without "right" and "wrong," man would live a life as the lilies in the grass, a quiet existence shaped by the work of the sky, without meaning, without pleasure or pain. The incredibly powerful nature of our capacity to see the dune formed by the earth as individual grains of sand, to perceive the seamless whole as distinct things, nonetheless does not negate the arbitrary and illusory nature of such distinction. Our world rests upon falsehood, and even though our prosperity depends upon this productive illusion, the truth of nature can still occupy a prominent place in our existence.

If man were to live his life in the unmediated truth of the earth, perceiving the skies as they are, as a continuous whole without parts or things, he would remain unable to make use of this truth. He cannot fathom or grasp this whole, neither with his mind nor with his hands. He would then be condemned to idleness, to vain contemplation, and would soon return to the earth out of which he came, as he would not discern the food he needs for his survival from the rocky soil under his feet or the clouds passing over his head, and he would be utterly incapable of finding a mate with whom to father offspring. If one does not distinguish what is one's own from what belongs to another, one's house is bound to vanish from the face of the earth. If a nation does not distinguish friend from foe, gold from iron, it will promptly be conquered by its neighbors and perish. If man does not trace a line between life and death, he will swiftly cease to live, and there will be no one to contemplate the truth of the earth and the sky. This is the contradiction at the heart of man's existence, his need for the illusions of the world to exist so that he may break the spell of these illusions by returning to a perfect absence of discerning of the earth, thereby unveiling the nature of this existence. The tension between these two opposite conceptions is nonetheless what gives its uniqueness to man's life. He is not condemned to remain possessed by this duality. He may indeed embrace both and transcend them, reconciling life and death, illusion and truth, earth and world, by not being attached to any of them, even to non-attachment itself, letting himself be guided by the course of the skies, following his instincts while keeping a mind through which things appear and disappear freely, according to one's needs. One may then let himself be guided by what is found in his hand, not needing to know whether it is a wooden staff or a serpent, a dead thing that comes out of life or a living thing that brings back to death, as all comes when it should.[141]

[141]See: 吳平。《新譯碧巖集》。台北：三民書局股份有限公司, 2005, Page 641: 「【題解】佛家認為一微塵是世界萬物構成的最小單位 ... 如果在它上面立一塵，則有山有河，有迷有悟，有染有淨，有佛有凡夫，有苦有樂，在差別相中得見森羅萬象的世界相。這在保守

Case 167 —The Dharma-Body That Endures and Remains Intact —堅固法身

Source: The Blue Cliff Record Case 82.

【中】

jǔ sēng wèn dà lóng sè shēn bài huài rú hé shì jiān gù fǎ
舉。僧問大龍：「色身[1] 敗壞，如何是堅固法
shēn lóng yún shān huā kāi sì jǐn jiàn shuǐ zhàn rú
身[2] 。」龍云：「山花[3] 開似錦[4] ，澗[5] 水湛[6] 如
lán
藍[7] 。」

[1] 【色身】 [sè shēn]: “the body tied to the senses.”

[2] 【法身】 [fǎ shēn]: “the Dharma body.” A translation of the Sanskrit word “dharmakāya” (धर्म काय). One of the “three bodies” of a Buddha in Mahāyāna Buddhism. It may be seen as the essence of the whole of nature.

[3] 【山花】 [shān huā]: “wild mountain flowers.” The term also designated a type of blue flower, used to dye silk, whose exact nature is uncertain. It would seem that the present case referred to these particular flowers, offering a depiction of a landscape with different shades of blue, where the mountain finds itself undistinguishable from the water and the sky, like the case mentioning the snow piled in the silver bowl (銀椀裏盛雪 [yín wǎn lǐ chéng xuě], see case 86) and the white horse entering the field of white flowers (白馬入蘆花 [bái mǎ rù lú huā], a “capping word” in the commentaries of the same case). (See: 《漢語大詞典》。上海辭書出版社, 2024 (Electronic Edition): 「1.山間野花。2. 植物名。」; See also: 唐段公路。《北戶錄・山花燕支》: 「山花，叢生。端州山崦間多有之。其葉類藍。其花似蓼，抽穗長二三寸，作青白色。正月開。土人採含苞者賣之，用為燕支粉，或持染絹帛，其紅不下藍花。」)

[4] 【錦】 S:【锦】 [jǐn]: “a brocade” / “an embroidered work.”

[5] 【澗】 S:【涧】 [jiàn]: a variant of 澗 [jiàn], “a mountain stream.”

[6] 【湛】 [zhàn]: “deep” / “clear” (water).

[7] 【藍】 S:【蓝】 [lán]: “indigo plant” / “blue.”

【日】

こ そう だいりょう と しきしん はい え いか
舉す。僧、大龍に問う、「色身は敗壞す、如何な
こ けんご ほっしん りゅういわ さんか ひら にしき
るか是れ堅固法身。」龍云く、「山花開いて錦に
に かんすいたた あい ごと
似たり、澗水湛えて藍の如し。」

【E】

的野老們看來處眉瞪目，家國卻因此而興盛。反之，不立一塵，就沒有迷悟、染淨、苦樂的差別，是無差別平等寂靜的境地。四海平靜，波瀾不起。野老們只求妥協姑息，家國因此喪亡。立與不立，興盛與喪亡，正是同生同死之機。... 超越一切對立，無分別地對待出世與入世才是真正禪者的胸懷。」

A monk asked Dalong: "The body tied to the senses perishes. What is the Dharma-body[1] that endures and remains intact?" Dalong said, "The blue wild flowers of the mountains open up and form a brocade; the water of the mountain streams is like indigo."

[1] "Dharma-body": See note 2 of the Chinese text.

What we look for in the heights of the world, in the depths of the sky, as it remains desperately out of our reach while we exhaust all our strength to attain it, is often rather to be found down below, upon the naked earth, right in front of our nose, ready to be picked up with our fingers. We see the eternal in the ever-changing ballet of the celestial bodies, dazzled by its mysterious splendor, and we forget to notice the ground whereon we spend the entirety of our lives, the rocky surface that represents the foundation of our world, even though it remains as it was since the tree of life was but an insignificant shoot emerging from the ocean. The lofty concepts and the cryptic terms of the scholar and the exceedingly learned priest attract the attention of the simple, but only bring him puzzlement and confusion if he truly pursues the truth of being. The genuine guide thus refuses to answer his questions while they abide in the heights. He brings him back to the ground, where things can be felt with the senses rather than merely talked or dreamed about. Metaphysics is abandoned, and poetry is wholeheartedly embraced. It is the language of the earth, words that appeal to the senses, without the need for reflection or interpretation. They are as clear as the day, as transparent as a mountain stream reflecting the sky painted with shades of indigo.

The words of the poet can soothe the anguish of those lost in the maze of incomprehension. Such men are worried about the meaning of their existence, and dread the day when they will have to face death. They see the fire of life extinguished in the bodies of their parents and witness the flesh of their progenitors being slowly worn out by the earth and the sky, until they are nothing but ashes and bones, and they therefore seek to hold on to something that will take their place, something that can be relied upon forever, and that can become the object of one's devotion. This imperishable body is nature itself, visible all around them. The wild flowers of the mountains open up and form a colorful brocade, an exquisitely woven carpet covering the earth, with each flower, each fiber, impossible to distinguish from the next. Yet each one of them is part of a whole. At all times, some flowers wither while others sprout from the soil. The individual perishes, but the whole

endures, and one may then realize that the individual is a mere illusion. Each cell in our body dies and is replaced, but we continue to exist. Each one of us dies, but mankind continues to build its history. Life itself may one day vanish, but the skies themselves will continue to be, carrying our immutable substance throughout time itself, without any clear line traced between life and death, earth and sky. When one sees that nothing perishes and nothing comes into being, but that only thoughts emerge and vanish, one may then let go of all need for a pillar upon which he could lean. This is when the whole of nature appears in its truth, as the eternal body, our own flesh, the sky itself.

Case 168 —The Ancient Buddha and the Pillar Intersect Each Other —古佛露柱

Source: The Blue Cliff Record Case 83.

This case is identical to the Book of Serenity, case 31.

【中】

jǔ　yún mén　shì zhòng yún　gǔ fó　yǔ lù zhù　xiāng jiāo
舉。雲門示眾云：「古佛[1]與露柱[2]相交[3]，
shì dì jī jī　zì dài yún　nán shān qǐ yún　běi shān xià yǔ
是第幾機[4]。」自代云：「南山起雲，北山下雨。」

[1] 【古佛】 [gǔ fó]: “the ancient Buddha.” A Buddha before historical times.

[2] 【露柱】 [lù zhù]: “the exposed pillar.” Exposed pillars refer to the columns on the front of the Dharma Hall of a temple. It may also symbolize an absence of passion, an impassiveness. (See: 吳平。《新譯碧巖集》。台北：三民書局股份有限公司, 2005. Page 185: 「露柱指法堂或佛殿外正面的圓柱。與瓦礫、燈籠等俱屬無生命之物，禪林用以表示無情、非情等意。」)

[3] 【相交】 [xiāng jiāo]: “to intersect.”

[4] 【機】S:【机】[jī]: “an activity of the mind.” Designates the subjective views of the mind, linked to the range of all the possibilities offered by imagination, in contrast to the objective reality of the material things before our eyes (事 [shì]), the earthly environment (境 [jìng]). The word is also directly linked to the notion of “opportunity.” For other uses of this word, see case 88, case 108, and case 112.

【日】

こ　うんもん　しゅ　しめ　いわ　こぶつ　ろちゅう
舉す。雲門、衆に示して云く、「古佛は露柱と
あいまじわ　こ　だいいくき　みずか　かわ　いわ　なんざん
相交る、是れ第幾機ぞ。」自ら代って云く、「南山に
くもお　おくざん　あめくだ
雲起こり、北山に雨下る。」

【E】

Yunmen, instructing the congregation, said, "The ancient Buddha[1] and the exposed pillar[2] intersect each other. What number of activities is that?" He replied on their behalf and said, "Clouds rise up over the South Mountain; rain falls on the North Mountain."

[1] "The ancient Buddha": See note 1 of the Chinese text.

[2] "The exposed pillar": See note 2 of the Chinese text.

Where is the boundary between the ancient and the new, the earth and the world it supports, or between a living thing and its progenitor? The first spark of life kindled in the heart of the ocean when our planet was still young ardently burns within our chest, continuously passing through the ages and spreading across the earth. We are the first and the last, the awakened ones of yore and the slumbering ones of the future, and more than this, we are the constellation of things around us, the ground beneath our feet, and the air above our heads, as any difference defining things is only the fruit of our deluded mind. The self is inextricably intertwined with its environment. The threads of the world are woven into the fabric of the earth, and who can tally them? To measure things is to submit oneself to the illusions of the world, to the arbitrariness of man's thoughts. One whose mind is clear sees both the fabric and the threads, the whole and the parts, the earth and the world, knowing that they are two complementary perspectives upon all that *is*, with the perception of one being tied to the existence of the other, a contrast out of which meaning arises, but to which one should not be attached, knowing its illusory nature.

To separate the self from its environment thus is to break the single thread symbolizing nature itself, causing the emergence of causes separate from consequences, whereas they originally form a continuous totality. Before man explored the earth, there was no difference between north and south, east and west, up and down. It is his piercing gaze that traced a line, quartering the planet so that it may be better grasped by the mind. There were no clouds or mountains, no rain or rivers, and yet nature was exactly as it is now. When we see clouds rise up over the southern mountain, once the sun has heated the moisture pervading the earth and the surface of the ocean, and the winds have gathered it in the lofty layers of the sky, they open up their storehouses of water and pour out abundant rain, which falls upon the northern mountain, before running back to the sea to complete the cycle. Ignorant of the continuity of this course of water, one may be puzzled by the link between the

clouds in the south and the water in the north, but this is only because he holds on to this arbitrary separation, unknown to nature itself. It is only when one sees the south in the north, the north in the south, that all may become suddenly clear, like clouds scattered by powerful currents of air, without anyone knowing where they went, because there is no “here” or “there.” Likewise, it is when one ceases to hold on to the distinction between the self and environment, the world and the earth, that one’s true nature may finally appear, and all may begin to make sense, as one lets go of all traces of meaning. Then, there is no longer any activity under the heavens. The clouds pass, and the surface of the water remains perfectly still.

Case 169 —Three Sorts of Sick Men —三種病人

Source: The Blue Cliff Record Case 88.

【中】

jǔ xuán shā shì zhòng yún zhū fāng lǎo sù jìn dào jiē wù
舉。玄沙 示眾云：「諸方老宿[1] ，盡道接物[2]
lì shēng hū yù sān zhǒng bìng rén lái zuò me shēng jiē huàn máng zhě niān
利生。忽遇三種病人來，作麼生接[3] 。患盲者，拈
chuí shù fú tā yòu bú jiàn huàn lóng zhě yǔ yán sān mèi tā
鎚[4] 竪拂[5] ，他又不見；患聾[6] 者，語言三昧[7] ，他
yòu bù wén huàn yǎ zhě jiāo yī shuō yòu shuō bù dé qiě zuò me shēng
又不聞；患啞[8] 者，教伊說，又說不得。且作麼生
jiē ruò jiē cī rén bù dé fó fǎ wú líng yàn sēng qīng yì yún mén
接。若接此人不得，佛法無靈驗。」僧請益 雲門。
yún mén yún rǔ lǐ bài zhe sēng lǐ bài qǐ yún mén yī zhǔ zhàng
雲門 云：「汝禮拜著。」僧禮拜起。 雲門 以拄杖
zhì sēng tuì hòu mén yún rǔ bú shì huàn máng fù huàn jìn qián lái
挃。僧退後， 門 云：「汝不是患盲。」復喚近前來，
sēng jìn qián mén yún rǔ bú shì huàn lóng mén nǎi yún hái huì
僧近前。 門 云：「汝不是患聾。」 門 乃云：「還會
me sēng yún bú huì mén yún rǔ bú shì huàn yǎ sēng
麼。」僧云：「不會。」 門 云：「汝不是患啞。」僧
yú cī yǒu xīng dèng qū zhì
於此有省。瞪呿挃[9]

[1] 【老宿】 [lǎo sù]: “an old master” / “a very experienced monk.”

[2] 【接物】 [jiē wù]: “to be in contact with the material [realm].”

[3] 【接】 [jiē]: “to attend [to someone.]”

[4] 【鎚】 S:【锤】 [chuí]: “a gavel.”

[5] 【拂】 [fú]: “a whisk.”

[6] 【患聾者】 [huàn lóng zhě]: “a deaf person.”

[7] 【三昧】 [sān mèi]: “samadhi” / “enlightenment.”

[8] 【患啞者】 [huàn yǎ zhě]: “a dumb person” (in the sense of being mute).

[9] 【瞪呿挃】: The meaning of this use of the three characters is open to interpretation. See also the same type of use in the 56th case (Blue Cliff Record 81), in which two of the three characters are identical; 瞪 [dèng]: “to open (one’s eyes) wide” / “to stare at”; 呿 [qū]: “to yawn” / “to remain with one’s mouth open.”; 挃 [zhì]: “to hit.”

【日】

舉す。玄沙、衆に示して云く、「諸方の老宿は盡く道う、『接物利生』と。忽し三種の病人の來たるに遇わば、作麼生か接せん。盲を患う者は、鎚を拈り拂を竪つるも、他又た見えず。聾を患う者は、語言三昧するも、他又た聞こえず。唖を患う者は、伊をして說わしむるも、又た說い得ず。且て作麼生か接せん。若し此の人を接し得ずんば、佛法は靈驗なしと。」僧、雲門に請益す。雲門云く、「汝禮拜著。」僧、禮拜して起つ。雲門、拄杖を以て挃く。僧、退後る。門云く、「汝は是れ盲を患わず。」復た喚ぶ、近前み來たれ。僧、近前づ。門云く、「汝は是れ聾を患わず。」門、乃ち云く、「還た會すや。」僧云く、「會せず。」門云く、「汝は是れ唖を患わず。僧此に於て省る有り。」

【E】

Xuansha, instructing the congregation, said, “Everywhere, the old masters all say that one should interact with

the material [realm] to benefit life [as a whole]. If one unexpectedly encounters three men with different sicknesses, how should one attend to them? The blind man, even if one takes up a gavel or raises a whisk, will not see anything. The deaf man, even if one offers him words of enlightenment, will not hear anything. The dumb man, even if one tells him to speak up, will not speak. How should one attend to them? If one is unable to attend to these people, Buddhism has no efficacy." A monk asked Yunmen for some guidance about this. Yunmen said, "Make a deep bow." The monk made a deep bow and then stood up straight. Yunmen used his staff to poke him. The monk stepped back. Yunmen said, "You are not blind!" Yunmen then asked the monk to come closer, and he came closer to him. Yunmen said, "You are not deaf!" He then said, "Now, do you understand?" The monk said, "No." Yunmen said, "You are not dumb!" At this moment, the monk got an insight.

To see through the use to perceive the essence is only a first step, and to embrace the way of the sky is to become a beacon guiding others to it. Furthermore, the desire to retreat into no-thing-ness permanently is an expression of attachment to it, forming an impassable barrier standing in the way. One who has become no-thing-ness itself no longer has need of being attached to it. He can wade through the most cluttered streets of the world and still carry no-thing within his heart, letting himself be an instrument of the way of the sky, interacting with the material realm for the benefit of life as a whole, and even for the heavens themselves as a whole, without distinguishing life from death.

The men of the world are afflicted with a single disease, that can, all the same, take many forms: an obliviousness to their own nature. They live upon the earth, but they cannot see it. The sky is always present above their head, and yet they fail to perceive it as it is. Their senses receive the multifaceted flow of the world of things, and all that they experience are things themselves, objects neatly arrayed and well-defined ideas, without a place for doubt or uncertainty in their minds. They spend their life observing the world, but they cannot see it. Their days are punctuated by sounds and voices, and yet they are deaf. Their mouths are like fluttering flags, constantly waving and emitting sounds, and yet they are dumb, incapable of uttering a single word. They live a life in the realm of representation, where all things

are measured according to man's reason, according to the whims of his kind, whereas the earth and the sky remain largely unaffected by the relentless activity of his hands and mind. The disease afflicting them, however, does not affect their bodies and their senses. They are perfectly healthy in their flesh, ready to succeed in all of their endeavors. The locus of their affliction is merely their heart, upon which they, despite this fact, potentially may exert almost total control, only lacking the will to change, to open themselves up to the truth of the way.

Someone who is cured of the disease of obliviousness may, however, become a physician graciously helping the afflicted, extending a helping hand, even though the cure must be drawn from within themselves. The cure indeed already lies within their hands. Their eyes are ready to see, their ears ready to hear, and their mind ready to understand, but their perception is hindered by the profusion of things within the reach of their senses. What sick men need is simply for one to point out the work of their own senses, showing them what their eyes see, what their ears hear, what their minds are thinking, showing them that these are things of the world, creations of their senses and their minds, rather than the truth of the way. Perceiving what the work of his senses and his mind is, man may then let go of all these things and discover the fundamental essence of his own body, with his senses finally unencumbered by the burden of the world, clear of all things, and everything perfectly limpid. Then, his eyes will see, his ears will hear, and his mind will perceive the truth of the way of the sky. From someone blinded by things to someone blind to things, he will finally know no-thing, feel everything.[142]

Case 170 —Nanyang's Water Jug —南陽淨瓶

Source: The Book of Serenity Case 42.

【中】

jǔ sēng wèn nán yáng zhōng guó shī rú hé shì běn shēn lú shè nà
舉。僧問南陽忠 國師：「如何是本身 盧舍那
guó shī yún yǔ wǒ guò jìng píng lái sēng jiāng jìng píng dào guó shī
[1]。」國師云：「與我過淨瓶來。」僧將淨瓶到國師
yún què ān jiù chǔ zhuó sēng fù wèn rú hé shì běn shēn lú shè nà
云：「却安舊處著。」僧復問：「如何是本身 盧舍那。」
guó shī yún gǔ fó guò qù jiǔ yǐ
國師云：「古佛過去久矣[2] 」

[142]See: 吳平。《新譯碧巖集》。台北：三民書局股份有限公司, 2005: 「... 禪宗有『無心地看』、『無心地聽』、『無心地說』的說法，這十分重要。『無心地看』、『無心地聽』、『無心地說』的無心，就是『空之心』。」

[1] 【盧舍那】 [lú shè nà]: "Locana [Buddha]." The concept of Buddha is described by some scriptures as being manifested through three different "bodies": Vairocana Buddha, Locana Buddha, and Sakyamuni Buddha. The name Locana is actually an abbreviation of Vairocana, and it represents the Saṃbhogakāya (संभोगकाय), or "body of enjoyment" in Sanskrit, 報身 [bào shēn], or "body of retribution" in Chinese. It represents the body of someone who has attained the absolute truth and achieved Buddhahood, thus displaying the wisdom of the Buddha (Not to be mistaken for Buddhalocāna, a female Buddha).

[2] 【矣】 [yǐ]: A particle marking completion, similar to the modern Chinese 了 [le].

【日】

舉す。僧、南陽の忠國師に問う、「如何なるか是れ本身の盧舍那。」國師云く、「我が與に淨瓶を過し來れ。」僧、淨瓶を將て到る。國師云く、「却て舊處に安ぜよ。」僧、復た問う、「如何なるか是れ本身の盧舍那。」國師云く、「古佛過去する事久し。」

【E】

A monk asked the National Teacher Zhong of Nanyang: "What is the essential body of Locana [Buddha]?"[1] The National Teacher said, "Pass me the water jug." The monk then passed him the water jug. The National Teacher said, "Now, put it back where it was." The monk asked once more: "What is the essential body of Locana [Buddha]?" National Teacher said, "The ancient Buddha is long gone."

[1] "Locana": See note 1 of the Chinese text.

To search for the way of the sky is to seek to know oneself. The body of the heavens is one with our own flesh, with the earthly objects surrounding us right now. There is not a single place where it is not,[143] but it only shines in all its truth in the place where there is not a single

[143] See: 神保如天. 《従容録通解》。東京：無我山房, 1915. Page 310 (Case 42).

thing. To discover such a place, one must first learn to pierce through the walls of the world, to shatter the things in front of us to reveal what they are made of. It is like a water jug made of clay baked in the heavenly fire. At first glance, it appears as a thing of the world, with a precise contour grasped by the eyes or the hands, bearing a unique name in the tongue of our fathers, and associated with a particular use, which may be to contain the liquid of life quenching our thirst, preventing it from being absorbed by the earth or evaporating into the sky. When one abandons the concept of the jug and sets aside the various uses it serves, this is when one begins to see beyond the walls of the world. The jug then appears as the earth itself. Its substance is unveiled, as its contour fades away, revealing it to be one with the rest of the ground upon which it is placed, and with the hand that holds it. The jug is the entire earth, the fullness of the celestial vault, the whole of being, here and now. This is, despite this fact, not the truth of being itself, only a shell covering and concealing it. The sky is the last and grandest thing, but a thing nonetheless, one that must be peered into or broken in order for its content to appear, like a sealed water jug. The essence of the jug is in the empty space it opens up within its earthly enclosure. This emptiness is only noticed when one sees beyond the substance of the object, as well as beyond the use, passing through both the world and the earth, to reach the place where there is only no-thing, what is left when the last thing has been discarded, when the whole has been released by the mind. This is when the truth of the skies is revealed, what pervades both the earth and the world, the ground of all things, something that is for all that seldom perceived.

The embodiment of truth, however, is not found solely in the objects around us. Man's actions equally reflect the way of the sky. When someone asks another man to pass him the water jug, and he does so, one shows how things of the world like words can affect the earth, and how the activity of the earth may become the source of a revelation of the ground of both earth and world, leading men to the place where there is not a single thing, unveiling the fundamental truth. Even if someone fails to realize that he is already in this place, letting no-thing-ness itself slip away from the reach of his mind, he still carries it within himself, and still embodies it himself. It never comes and never goes away. It is always there, everywhere, at all times, and thus one day he will see, and gorge himself on emptiness, satiating his thirst forever with the empty jug, never in need of anything else.

Case 171 —Dongshan's Intimate Contact —洞山常切

Source: The Book of Serenity Case 98.

【中】

jǔ sēng wèn dòng shān sān shēn zhōng nà shēn bú duò zhū shù
舉。僧問洞山：「三身[1] 中。那身不墮諸數。」
shān yún wú chǎng yú cǐ qiè
山云：「吾常于此切[2] 。」

[1] 【三身】 [sān shēn]: "the three bodies [of Buddha]." It represents three different aspects of Buddha: the "dharma body," 法身 [fǎshēn] in Chinese and "dharmakāya" (धर्मकाय) in Sanskrit, associated with the tangible reality of the universe; the second is the "body of retribution," 報身 [bào shēn] in Chinese, or "body of enjoyment," saṃbhogakāya (संभोगकाय) in Sanskrit, and is associated with the enjoyment of reaping the reward of one's spiritual practice; the third is the "transformation body," 應身 [yīng shēn] in Chinese and "nirmāṇakāya" (निर्माणकाय) in Sanskrit, which represents the earthly incarnation of a Buddha, allowing them to interact with the world and to guide the deluded toward enlightenment.

[2] 【切】 [qiè]: "to be close to [something]."

【日】

こ そう とうざん と さんしん なか な しん しょ
舉す。僧、洞山に問う、「三身の中那の身か諸
すう だ さんいわ わ つね これ おい せつ
數に墮せざる。」山云く、「吾れ常に此に于て切なり。」

【E】

A monk asked Dongshan: "Among the three bodies,[1] which one does not degenerate into a number [of parts]?" Dongshan said, "I am constantly in intimate contact with it."

[1] "Three bodies": See note 1 of the Chinese text.

If there is only one single thing to be perceived, it is as if there were nothing. Our eyes may be plunged in the most absolute brightness or in total obscurity, it makes no difference, as long as there is no contrast between this thing and another, or between this thing and its absence. And yet, if there is any difference, if there is any contrast or opposition between one thing and another, it is the result of man's perception and reason, the product of his world, as such differences do not exist outside of his mind. The skies are like a piece of embroidery whose threads are too fine to be distinguished, and only animals are endowed with senses that rend it into pieces, with man alone able to finely cut these pieces

further according to his will. This apparent contradiction between the incomprehensible uniformity of the truth of being, representing a single "thing" in the eyes of man but which in its essence is not even a thing, and the graspable representation of this uniformity, shattered into pieces and thereby forming only a deformed image of it, is at the origin of the foundation of man's world, the realm of the ten thousand things, facing the continuous uniformity of the heavens. Without this world, without the manifold nature of our surroundings, we would be one with the whole of nature, but we would not be familiar with it. Something with which we are totally one cannot be observed by our eyes or considered by our minds. Just as contrast is necessary for something to be seen, distance is equally necessary to become intimate with it, implying an interplay between closeness and distance, knowledge and ignorance.

The shattering of the unicity of the skies is therefore the key that allows them to be seen and allows man to grow intimate with them. Standing inside the world of things and facing the unicity of the celestial vault, man can progressively learn the nature of the all-encompassing realm, whose arms are wrapped around the world itself. Studying each constellation, naming each star, and following their movements day after day, one becomes more intimate with the whole that they form. To understand the body, one should closely examine each blood vessel, bone, and organ; only then will the whole they form begin to make sense and its nature be understood. Likewise, the great body of the heavens must first be appropriated in the realm built by the hands and the mind of man, with him having taken an appropriate distance from it, having observed it as an object of study. Then only can the illusory nature of such representations be pointed out, revealing that what has been shattered to be grasped by our mind can be mended, pieced back into a whole, which will then reveal itself in all its splendor as one remains endowed with the fruit of his study, the reward of the shattering itself. True intimacy can then be achieved, balancing one's attention between the world and the sky, the pieces and the whole, letting oneself at times stand out from it, and at other times letting one's whole being be engulfed in the indistinguishable totality.

Case 172 —Langya's Mountains and Rivers —瑯琊山河

Source: The Book of Serenity Case 100.

【中】

jǔ sēng wèn láng yá jué hé shàng qīng jìng běn rán yún
舉。僧問 瑯琊覺 和尚：「『清淨本然』[1] 。云

hé hū shēng shān hé dà dì jué yún qīng jìng běn rán yún hé hū shēng
何[2] 忽生山河大地。」覺 云：「清淨本然云何忽生
shān hé dà dì
山河大地。」

[1]【清淨】S:【清淨】[qīng jìng]: “to be pure” / “to be clear”; 本然 [běn rán]: “inherently” / “by nature” / “fundamentally”; This expression comes from the Śūraṅgama Sūtra (《楞嚴經》 fascicle 4): 「清淨本然，云何忽生山河大地。」

[2]【云何】 [yún hé]: “how come” / “why.”

【日】

こ そう ろう や かくおしょう と しょうじょうほんねん
擧す。僧、瑯琊の覺和尚に問う、「『清淨本然』。
いかん たちま さんが だいち しょう かく いわ しょうじょう
云何ぞ忽ち山河大地を生ず。」覺云く、「清淨
ほんねん いかん たちま さんが だいち しょう
本然　云何ぞ忽ち山河大地を生ず。」

【E】

A monk asked Master Jue of Langya:“‘Inherently pure and clear.’[1] How did the mountains, rivers, and the great earth as a whole suddenly come into being?” Jue said, “‘Inherently pure and clear.’ How did the mountains, rivers, and the great earth as a whole suddenly come into being?”

[1] “Inherently pure and clear”: See note 1 of the Chinese text.

Pure and clear is the ground of all things, the infinite abyss, which is the place where there is not a single thing. Impurity and opaqueness appear as soon as the first thing emerges from it. Things are born out of no-thing-ness, but how did they suddenly come into being? The substance of all things is the body of the heavens themselves, existing since they were themselves unfolded eons ago, and whose origin remains unfathomable, but this substance remained no-thing, an indistinguishable totality, without parts or pieces, until a branch of the tree of life began to perceive it, as a subject in contact with an object, and began to cut it into pieces according to its needs, ensuring the survival and the thriving of the creatures forming this branch. Mountains and rivers found upon the earth were always there in their substance, but animals are the ones who began to single them out from the rest of

what is encompassed by the heavens, and man is the one who gave them names, allowing him to invoke their presence in the minds of men with a slight movement of the tongue and the lips, or the stroke of a pen.

How did mountains and rivers come into being? As soon as one took a glance at them and saw them as something distinct from the rest of the earth and the sky, they became things for the living, and when they received a name, they became monuments inside the world of men. The inherently pure and clear nature of the fundamental ground was thereby muddied so that animals may strive for their survival and reproduction. It is this muddying of the clarity of no-thing-ness itself that paradoxically allows them to see what is around them. The dust of the world is what permits the emergence of contrast and meaning. This dust reveals the presence of the light pervading the sky, but which is only visible when it is diffused by something opaque. The world of man thus soils the purity of no-thing-ness, but it is the medicine curing him of the blindness afflicting the living before the building of this world. The sun may be more clearly seen as a fleeting image on the surface of a lake than directly observed, its fiery radiance being too overwhelming to our eyes, and likewise, the world is what allows no-thing-ness to be perceived, through the soiling of its purity, the opacification of its perfect clarity.

Inherently pure and clear is the ground. How did the mountains and the rivers come into being? To ask such a question is by itself to soil this purity and to muddy this clarity, and so would any attempt at an answer. To perceive the ground, one should depart from the heights of the world and come down below, being attentive to the work of the senses rather than to the functioning of the mind. The one asking the question only has to incline his ear toward the mountains themselves, and there he will hear the answer, in the form of an echo: Howdidthemountainscometobeing, Howdidthemountainscometobeing... This voice of the mountain represents the harmonious unicity of the world and no-thing-ness, of language and the earth, as it is a sound-wave running through the sky, a tangible phenomenon just like the mountains themselves, no-thing-ness itself when it is heard as a mere sound, meaningless, but it is also a sentence laden with meaning in the world, and it can also be heard as such. It exhibits the dual facets of every single thing, which are at once things of the world and embodiments of no-thing-ness itself. They come to be through the agency of the work of our mind, but they remain true to their essence, remaining the incomprehensible whole, that which is not a thing, inherently pure and clear.

Case 173 —Distancing Oneself from Language —離却語言

Source: The Gateless Barrier Case 24.

【中】

fēng xué hé shàng yīn sēng wèn yǔ mò shè lí wēi rú hé tōng bú fàn xué yún cháng yì jiāng nán sān yuè lí zhè gū tí chù bǎi huā xiāng

風穴和尚因僧問：「語默涉[1]離微[2]，如何通不犯。」穴云：「長憶[3]江南三月裏，鷓鴣[4]啼[5]處百花香。」

[1] 【涉】 [shè]: “to wade across a body of water” / “to be involved.”

[2] 【離微】 [lí wēi]: A concept found in a Buddhist philosophical treatise named: “The Treasure Theory” (寶藏論), traditionally attributed to Jìn Sēng Zhào (晋僧肇), a 4th-century A.D. Buddhist teacher. This treatise states that the nature of all living beings, that is, the fundamental state of life, is pure (清淨). This “originally pure” (本來清淨) life has two aspects. One is an inner, static “Li” 「離」, literally meaning “separation” or “departing.” The other is the external, dynamic “Wei” 「微」, literally meaning “minute” / “small.” The characteristic of “Li” is the fact that it does not rely on the external world, the “dusts” linked to sensory phenomena. In contrast, “Wei” refers to all dynamic, external activities, tied to the stream of the senses, the fine dust composed by the innumerable things of the world. These two attributes highlight the purity of the source of life of all living beings. Because it is not associated with external phenomena, nor does it involve inner thought, the state of “Li Wei” 「離微」 is “neither taking nor releasing, neither practicing nor learning... It is not captured by the three realms... It is equal and universal, absolute perfection.” (「非取非捨、非修非學…非三界所攝…平等普遍、一切圓滿。」) N.b: The present explanation largely paraphrases the entry for 「離微」 in: 丁福保。《佛學大辭典》。佛陀教育基金會, 2004. For the original text of the treatise, See: 《晉僧肇法師寶藏論》。 CBETA.

[3] 【長憶】 S:【长忆】 [cháng yì]: “to often think [about something].”

[4] 【鷓鴣】 S:【鹧鸪】 [zhè gū]: “a partridge.”

[5] 【啼】 S:【啼】 [tí]: “to crow” / “to hoot.”

【日】

こ ふけつ おしょうちな そうと ごもく りび わた いか つう ふぼん けついわ とこしな おも こうなんさんげつ うち しゃこな ところ ゆっかかんば

擧す。風穴和尚因みに僧問う、「語黙、離微に渉り、如何にせば通じて不犯なる。」穴云く、「長えに憶う江南三月の裏、鷓鴣啼く處百花香し。」

【E】

A monk asked Fengxue: “Speaking or silent, wading across Nirvana and Samsara, nothingness and the world,[1] how can one go through without fault?” Fengxue observed: “I often

remember the springtime, south of the [Yangtze] river,[2] where the partridges sang, bathed in the fragrance of a myriad of flowers."

[1] "Speaking or silent, wading across nirvana and samsara, nothingness and the world": See note 2 of the Chinese text.

[2] "South of the [Yangtze] river," that is, the region called "Jiangnan" (江南 [Jiāng nán]), meaning "south of the river."

That which is meant to guide often becomes that which imprisons. The faith that originated as a response to the mystery of being and the incomprehension of the way man is meant to go, as an answer offered as a guide for those who are lost in their existence. Seeking liberation, they appeal to the heavens to break the earthly yoke resting upon their shoulders, often ends up becoming a stumbling block upon their path, a hindrance preventing such liberation, as they see their suffering compounded with unbearable guilt for their transgressions and fear of punishment. To live such an existence is, however, a sign that one remains ignorant of the way of the sky, of the ground of being itself. Indeed, faults and transgressions have no substance upon the earth, and no extension through the skies, either in time or in space. They are pure creations of the mind, things belonging to his world. Man is the source of his suffering, the spring from which he drinks what poisons him. The most noxious poison may still reveal itself to also be the most potent medicine, if one is endowed with the knowledge of its nature and its use. The world may also be a source of genuine guidance rather than something veiling the truth lying beyond it, and even more than this, it may also be something that reveals its splendor and allows it to be better seen, something that requires some distance, like a fish that realizes the nature of water only after being taken out of it.

The words of the poet serve as a potent form of guidance given to the man who is lost in the world and afflicted by its woes. His words can convey feelings, fruit of a personal experience of the truth of the earth and the sky, which can be shared with another human being for his benefit. The jewels of the earth, the voice of the sky, entering the noisy and cluttered streets of the world, hold the power to cleanse them of all their dust, purifying the minds of men of their guilt and their transgressions, emptying their heads of heaps of things they have no need of. The words of the poet are like a helping hand taking men out of these crowded streets and out of the walls of their grimy city, showing them the simple beauty of the earth, the raw elegance of the living things populating the sea, the land, and the air, and the splendid harmony of the turning of the

celestial wheels. Contemplating the autumn landscape at dusk, feeling the waning of life in the air as the brown, desiccated leaves litter the muddy ground and taint the air with the distinctive scent of the earth, the song of the robin resonates through his ears. This vision is meant to show him something rather than to tell him anything: the fact that in this landscape, representing the most unadulterated truth of the earth, there is no fault or transgression, no merit or sin. The robin stands upon the threshold between earth and world, between speech and silence, singing for its brethren and its future mate. It does so without words or silence, singing a song neither meaningful nor meaningless, wielding signs whose signification is largely left undetermined, perceiving mountains and rivers as things standing out from the rest of the earth and the sky, yet without calling them by any name. The bird incarnates harmony between earth and world, enjoying the benefit it provides him, for his survival and perpetuation, while not letting itself be burdened with a profusion of things of the world, nor losing itself in interrogations and perplexity concerning where it should go. The bird is like the river itself, advancing toward its destiny, progressing along the way, without hesitation or worry. Man nonetheless enjoys a power unrivaled in the animal world. Indeed, he alone can gain an awareness of his own condition, first as a prisoner, a slave of the world, and then as a free man, once he has let go of his burden, adopting the conduct of the robin instinctively singing its autumn song but also endowed with the knowledge given to him, fruit of the countless experiences of his brethren and ancestors, discerning the truth of the earth from the falsehood of the world, thereby being at home in both realms, and alone able to perceive that they are one single thing, which is itself no-thing, no-thing-ness itself.

Case 174 —The Empty-Headed Lad —掠虛頭漢

Source: The Blue Cliff Record Case 10.

【中】

jǔ mù zhōu wèn sēng jìn lí shén chù sēng biàn hè zhōu
舉。睦州問僧：「近離甚處。」僧便喝。州
yún lǎo sēng bèi rǔ yí hè sēng yòu hè zhōu yún sān hè sì
云：「老僧被汝一喝。」僧又喝。州云：「三喝四
hè hòu zuò me shēng sēng wú yǔ zhōu biàn dǎ yún zhè lüè xū tóu
喝後作麼生。」僧無語。州便打云：「這掠[1] 虛頭
hàn
漢。」

[1] 【掠】[lüè]: “to take by force” / “to sweep.”

【日】

舉す。睦州、僧に問う、「近ごろ甚處を離れしや。」僧便ち喝す。州云く、「老僧汝に一喝せらる。」僧又た喝す。州云く、「三喝四喝の後作麼生。」僧無語。州便ち打って云く、「這の掠虚頭の漢。」

【E】

Muzhou asked a monk: “Where have you come from?” The monk then shouted: “Haa!” Muzhou said, “This old monk has been shouted at with a ‘Haa!’ by you.” The monk once more shouted: “Haa!” Muzhou said, “One shouts a ‘Haa!’ three or four times, and then what?” The monk did not utter a word. Muzhou then hit him saying: “This lad’s head is completely empty!”

When the wise man commonly appears as a fool in the eyes of the world, the fool easily considers himself to be wise, but who can tell who is the fool and who is the wise? Both may behave in the exact same manner, adopt the same gestures, and utter the same words. One may mimic the other, and those in their presence would never be able to ascertain which one is a genuine wise man, which one is merely a trained monkey. They may try to probe the minds of these men with tricky questions, laying traps in front of them, and attentively observing their reactions, trying to discern signs of intelligence or clues of stupidity. The certainty of their beliefs concerning the nature of these men may increase as a result, but they may always be found to have been the foolish ones, tricked by someone wiser than they are. Replying to questions with silence is the ultimate ambiguous answer, a gesture whose meaning can encompass anything or everything. It may represent a denial of the question’s value, as well as be an acknowledgment of one’s ignorance. It may be an instantiation of no-thing-ness itself, an attempt to bring the one lost in the maze of the world back to the great, empty plains of the great wasteland, chasing away metaphysics with the faint whisper of the wind heard in the stead of words, or it may simply be the reaction of one whose head is empty, not because the mind has relinquished all attachment and has become acquainted with no-thing-ness, but rather because it simply was an empty vessel from the start, without realization

or awareness. To perceive that one is no-thing-ness is indeed different from being empty-headed. It is to release all things, the entirety of the wealth of the world that one has appropriated, rather than to be a destitute man who never had anything in the first place, and who leaves robbers empty-handed, whereas the wise offers them all that he has.

One whose head is perpetually empty is no different from the beasts roaming the land, the sea, and the air. The one whose head is constantly cluttered with the things of the world is a slave of it, blind to his own nature and to what binds him with what surrounds him. The wise knows when to wield the tools of the world, and when to drop them onto the ground, leaving his hands and mind empty. He walks the fine edge separating the world from the earth, the realm of things and no-thing-ness, playing with them both while seeing that they are one and the same. Seeing some men lost in the vast labyrinth of things of the world, he offers words of guidance, praises in the form of reproval, reproval in the form of praises, showing others that this world is illusion, falsehood, and confusion. Clarity and purity are not to be found within its walls, and thus he undermines its foundations, pointing out the way to go, inviting them to pass its frontiers to behold the truth of the sky. But in turn, when he is the recipient of poorly chosen words, the audience of a pitiful spectacle performed with an unskilled mouth, he cuts out this performance with a thundering roar: "Haa!" He triggers a hurricane that blows away all the useless things of the world, all the poorly crafted assemblies of words, clearing the mind of those finding themselves on its path, robbing them of all their possessions, all the illusions to which they desperately held on. It blows the men of the world out of it and violently throws them upon the naked earth, leaving them stunned and speechless. Witness of such a feat, such a true mastery of the way, the fool may attempt to imitate the roar of the tiger, being a kitten trying to topple the pillars of the world with its mewing, biting the hands that want to feed him. He will nonetheless one day grow in strength and wisdom, and his roar will then also resound throughout the world, causing it to grow silent, and making its inhabitants listen to the delicate whisper of the leaves elegantly rolling upon the earth as they are guided by the celestial forces.

Case 175 —The Chin Rest and the Meditation Mat —禪板蒲團

Source: The Blue Cliff Record Case 20.

A more complete version can be found in the Book of Serenity, case 80.[144]

[144]See Book of Serenity, case 80: 「舉。龍牙問翠微。如何是祖師西來意微云。與我過

【中】

jǔ lóng yá wèn cuì wēi rú hé shì zǔ shī xī lái yì wēi
舉。龍牙 問 翠微：「如何是祖師西來意。」微
yún yǔ wǒ guò chán bǎn lái yá guò chán bǎn yǔ cuì wēi wēi
云：「與我過禪板[1] 來。」牙 過禪板與 翠微， 微
jiē dé biàn dǎ yá yún dǎ jí rèn dǎ yào qiě wú zǔ shī xī
接得，便打。 牙 云：「打即任打，要且無祖師西
lái yì yá yòu wèn lín jì rú hé shì zǔ shī xī lái yì
來意[2] 。」 牙 又問 臨濟：「如何是祖師西來意。」
jì yún yǔ wǒ guò pú tuán lái yá qǔ pú tuán guò yǔ lín jì
濟 云：「與我過蒲團來。」 牙 取蒲團過與 臨濟。
jì jiē dé biàn dǎ yá yún dǎ jí rèn dǎ yào qiě wú zǔ shī
濟 接得，便打 牙 云：「打即任打，要且無祖師
xī lái yì
西來意。」

[1] 【禪板】 [chán bǎn]: “a chin rest” (used during meditation).

[2] 【西來意】 [xī lái yì]: “the meaning of the coming from the West [of Bodhidharma].”

【日】

こ りゅうげ すいび と いか こ
舉す。龍牙、翠微に問う、「如何なるか是れ
そし せいらい い び いわ わ ため ぜんばん も
祖師西來意。」微云く、「我が與に禪板を過ち
き げ ぜんばん わた すいび あた び うけ
來たれ。」牙、禪板を過して翠微に與う。微、接
と すなわ う げいわ う すなわ う
得りて便ち打つ。牙云く、「打つことは便ち打つ
まか ようか そし せいらい い な げ ま りん
に任すも要且つ祖師西來意無し。」牙、又た臨
ざい と いか こ そし せいらい い ざい
濟に問う、「如何なるか是れ祖師西來意。」濟
いわ わ ため ふとん も き げ ふとん
云く、「我が與に蒲團を過ち來たれ。」牙、蒲團を
と りんざい わた ざい うけ と すなわ う げ
取って臨濟に過與す。濟、接得りて便ち打つ。牙
いわ う すなわ う まか ようか そし
云く、「打つことは便ち打つに任すも要且つ祖師
せいらい い な
西來意無し。」

禪板來牙取禪板與翠微微接得便打牙云。打即任打。要且無祖師西來意又問臨濟。如何是祖師西來意濟云。與我將蒲團來牙取蒲團與臨濟濟接得便打牙云。打即任打。要且無祖師意牙後住院。僧問。和尚當年問翠微臨濟祖意。二尊宿明也未牙云。明即明矣。要且無祖師意。」

【E】

Longya asked Cuiwei: "What is the meaning of the patriarch's coming from the west?" Cuiwei said, "Bring me a chin rest."[1] Longya brought one and gave it to him. Cuiwei took it and hit him [with it]. Longya said, "Someone may hit as much as he pleases, but there is no meaning to the patriarch's coming from the West!" Longya also asked Linji: "What is the meaning of the patriarch's coming from the west?" Linji said, "Bring me a meditation mat." Longya took a meditation mat and gave it to Linji. Linji took it and then hit him [with it]. Longya said, "One may hit as much as he pleases, but there is no meaning to the patriarch's coming from the West!"

[1] "Chin rest": See note 1 of the Chinese text.

How puzzling for the newcomer to recognize the path trodden since birth, yet only now truly perceived. Having lived an existence centered around the worship of the idols of the world, which are largely considered the most meaningful parts of it, he cannot fathom that the most precious of all things, the source of the clearest enlightenment, may be utterly devoid of meaning. Meaning indeed belongs to the world, and it is the world's treasure. What is found outside of it is meaningless, valueless, and useless. This nonetheless does not negate the fact that what is found beyond the boundaries of the world represents the fundamental essence of all that is, and seems to represent the destiny that man is called to appropriate. The masters of bygone eras pointed out the way, which is to be found equally in the north, the south, the east, and the west. The glow of the faintest star is enough to light the path at night, and the blazing fire of the sun is no more effective in guiding those who seek it. These masters did not merely use one part of their body to guide the men of the world, such as their tongue or the tip of their finger, but rather showed them the way with their whole flesh, with their entire being, by walking, sitting, lying down, or standing. They spoke and kept silent, gave gentle embraces and violently struck down, according to the needs of those found around them, responding without thinking to what the heavens blew toward them, with many failing to perceive this guidance, too busy looking at the finger to see what it pointed toward.

When one asks for the meaning of the way, he thus shows that he is still a prisoner of the world, someone who only sees the earth through the

lens of the things created by the minds of men. The way is meaningless, and this meaninglessness is what can liberate him from the yoke of the world, shattering the chains binding his hands and feet, vaporizing the blindfold covering his eyes. Meaning is what obscures the truth of the earth and the sky. This truth becomes perceptible only when one enters into direct contact with it, having abandoned his quest for meaning, letting himself be approached by nature rather than trying to explain it. He only has to observe the master sitting cross-legged upon the ground, incarnating a link between earth and sky, meaning and meaninglessness, by his very existence, in order for his eyes to see the celestial radiance pervading all things. If he still bothers him with meaningless chatter about his search for meaningfulness, he can then order him to bring him a sitting mat and then hit him with it, a sign of his lack of practice that leads him astray, into the heights of the world, trapped in futile discussions. The pain is there to remind him that he is made of flesh, and that the foundation stone of the world is this pain that teaches him about life and death, what he is destined to do by the innermost and most ancient instincts of animal life itself. For the embracer of the way, the mats and the other instruments meant to support their body and alleviate the pain of sitting meditation are reminders of their attachment to their body, to their life, as they fear pain and seek pleasure, still waiting to soak their whole being in the truth of meaninglessness, of no-thing-ness, where there is no life and death, no master or disciple, no east or west, no right or wrong. It is now your turn! Take this book and hit yourself with it,[145] that you may feel this pain in your bones, opening up your eyes to see your own true face, and contemplating its meaninglessness, without fear, despair, or desire.

Case 176 —Baofu's Summit of the Peak of Wonder —保福妙峰頂

Source: The Blue Cliff Record Case 23.

【中】

jǔ bǎo fú cháng qìng yóu shān cì fú yǐ shǒu zhǐ yún zhǐ
舉。保福，長慶 遊山次。福 以手指云：「只
zhè lǐ biàn shì miào fēng dǐng qìng yún shì zé shì kě xī xǔ
這裏便是妙峯頂。」慶 云：「是則是，可惜許[1]
xuě dòu zhuó yǔ yún jīn rì gòng zhè hàn yóu shān tú gè shén
。」雪竇 著語云：「今日共這漢遊山，圖[2] 箇什

[145]See: Villalba, Dokusho. *Hekiganroku. Crónicas del Acantilado Azul.* Miraguano Ediciones. 1994. Page 92: "Dame el libro que tienes entre tus manos y permíteme que te lo arroje a tu honorable rostro."

me fù yún bǎi qiān nián hòu bú dào wú zhī shì shǎo hòu jǔ
麼。」復云：「百千年後不道無，只是少。」後舉
sì jìng qīng qīng yún ruò bú shì sūn gōng biàn jiàn dú lóu biàn yě
似鏡清。清云：「若不是孫公，便見髑髏[3] 遍野[4]
。」

[1] 【許】 S:【许】 [xǔ]: “somewhat.”

[2] 【圖】 S:【图】 [tú]: “to intend.”

[3] 【髑髏】 S:【髑髅】 [dú lóu]: “a skull.”

[4] 【遍野】 [biàn yě]: “everywhere.”

【日】

こ ほふく ちょうけい やま あそ とき ふく て
舉す。保福と長慶と、山に遊びし次、福、手を
もっ さ いわ だ ここ すなわ こ みょうほう
以て指して云く、「只だ這裏こそは便ち是れ妙峰
ちょう けい いわ ぜ すなわ ぜ
頂。」慶云く、「是なることは則ち是なるも、
おしむべし せっちょうじゃくご いわ こんにち こ おとこ
可惜許。」雪竇著語して云く、「今日這の漢と
とも さん あそ こ なに はか ま
共に山に遊ばば、箇の什麼をか圖らん。」復た
いわ ひゃくせんねんご な い た こ
云く、「百千年後も無しとは道わず、只だ是れ
まれ のち きょうじょう し め しょういわ も こ
少なり。」後に鏡清に舉似す。清云く、「若し是れ
そんこう すなわ どくろ や あまね み
孫公にあらずんば、便ち髑髏の野に遍きを見ん。」

【E】

As Baofu and Changching went out on an excursion in the mountains, Baofu pointed with a finger and said, “Right here is the summit of the Peak of Wonder.”[1] Changching said, “Indeed, but that’s somewhat regrettable.” (Xuedou commented, saying: “These fellows are going out on an excursion in the mountains, but what is their intention?” He also said, “Hundreds or thousands of years from now, one does not say that there won’t be any, but only that there will be few.”) Later, they told Jingqing about this, and Jingqing said, “If it weren’t for the venerable grandson [Changqing], one would only see skulls, everywhere.”

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An infant cannot climb the highest peak of the earth on its own. It first requires years of attentive care, being patiently fed by its family, protected from danger, and taught to master body and mind —opening eyes and inclining ears to slowly grow acquainted with the surrounding world. Only after long years of practice and guidance can it become a man and undertake the great ascent, carrying with him the benevolence and wisdom of countless generations.

Once the peak has been reached, nonetheless also comes the great trial. The ascent may be strenuous, and may demand prolonged efforts, and thus, once it has been completed, it may become the source of an attachment, as one is then naturally reluctant to depart from the unencumbered heights, where one may freely contemplate the magnificence of the skies, the infinite emptiness above, which is also the ground of the world itself, the foundation of the mountain upon which he stands. This wondrous sight may become so alluring that one may easily lose himself in it, forgetting his own being, wanting to take off his flesh like a garment so as to vanish in the unfathomable expanse encompassing all that is, leaving only his bones upon the earth, being dead to the world, one with the heavens. The peak is thus littered with the skeletons of those who considered it their ultimate destination, the place they were meant to reach and which marked the end of their journey, the completion of their life. These men are lost indeed. Not because they have forgotten themselves, but rather because they are oblivious to the fate of others. They would not have reached the peak without the selfless efforts of a multitude of other men, who did not let themselves be annihilated in the blissful contemplation of the emptiness above but rather abandoned the fruit of their own struggle and agreed to descend back to the world, so as to take their brethren by the hand and lead them on their journey.[146]

When compassion overcomes the desire for unity with the essence of the heavens, the bones suddenly rise up from the ground. The dead come back to life, and the skeletons are once again covered with flesh, soaked in blood. The finger then points toward the peak, as the mouth declares: "Right here is the Peak of Wonder!" It is on the horizon. It is right under his feet,[147] and it is within his heart. Some will abandon it, while others will carry it within themselves, as they return to the

[146]See: 吳平。《新譯碧巖集》。台北：三民書局股份有限公司, 2005: 「真空無相即真空妙用，得道之人必須去濟度眾生。所以長慶慧棱說，『你這樣說，對倒是對，可惜還不完美。』」

[147]See: Yamada, Kou'un, *Hekiganroku (Blue Cliff Record)* [Unpublished manuscript]: "'Right here is the summit of Myô Peak.' I used to think that he was pointing to a nearby mountaintop when he said this, but I have come to feel more and more that he was pointing not to a distant spot, but to the ground directly beneath him, saying that right here is the summit of Myô mountain." Original Japanese: 「私は以前には山頂をこう指して、只這裏便ち是れ妙峰頂とやったと思っていたが、その後よくよく考えてみると、それでは遠くを見ていることになる。そのように遠くではなく

world down below, for the sake of their brethren. There, they will once again point their finger toward the heights, toward the destiny of all the living, which will nonetheless not be the end of their path, but only a milestone. Eons from now, when every sentient being will have made countless ascents and descents, the great mountain will find itself leveled by the multitude of feet having trodden the various paths leading to its peak. Then, there will no longer be any height or abyss, no peak or valley. The earth itself will lose its name, and the stars will vanish from the sky. There will no longer be any life or death, ascent or path, only clarity and obscurity perfectly married to each other, with no-thing left to perceive.

Case 177 —Entering Directly with the Staff Across the Shoulders —横擔直入

Source: The Blue Cliff Record Case 25.

【中】

jǔ lián huā fēng ān zhǔ niān zhǔ zhàng shì zhòng yún gǔ rén dào zhè lǐ
舉。蓮花峯庵主，拈拄杖示眾云：「古人到這裏，
wèi shén me bù kěn zhù zhòng wù yǔ zì dài yún wèi tā tú lù bù
為什麼不肯[1] 住。」眾無語。自代云：「為他途路不
dé lì fù yún bì jìng rú hé yòu zì dài yún zhì lì
得力[2] 。」復云：「畢竟如何。」又自代云：「椔標[3]
héng dān bú gù rén zhí rù qiān fēng wàn fēng qù
橫擔[4] 不顧人，直入千峯萬峯去。」

[1] 【肯】 [kěn]: “to be ready [to do something]” / “to be willing.”

[2] 【為他途路不得力】 [wèi tā tú lù bù dé lì]: “because ‘it’ did not gain strength while on the road [there].”

[3] 【椔標】 [zhì lì]: “a wooden staff”. The first character is quite rare, and its exact meaning is unclear. It probably describes the sort of wood this kind of staff was made of.

[4] 【橫擔】 S:【橫担】 [héng dān]: “to carry [something] across one’s shoulders.”

【日】

こ れんげ ほうあんじゅ しゅじょう ねん しゅ しめ
舉す。蓮華峰菴主、拄杖を拈じて衆に示して
いわ こじん ここ いた なにゆえ じゅう
云く、「古人這裏に到って、爲什麼にか住すること
かえん しゅ む ご みずか かわ いわ かれ
と肯ぜざる。」衆、無語。自ら代って云く、「他の

て、むしろ手を下にこうやって（足許を指す）、這裏便ち是れ妙峰頂!、とやったんではないかと思う。」From: 山田耕雲。《碧岩集提唱山田耕雲》。[Unpublished manuscript].

途路に力を得ざりしが爲なり。」復た云く、「畢竟如何。」又た自ら代って云く、「椰標横に擔って人を顧みず、直に千峰萬峰に入り去る。」

【E】

The hermit of Lotus Peak took up his staff and showed it to the congregation, saying: “When the ancient ones reached this point, why wouldn’t they abide there?” The congregation did not utter a word. He himself answered on their behalf, saying: “Because ‘it’ did not gain strength while on the road [there].” Again, he said, “After all, how is it?” Once more, he himself answered on their behalf, saying: “With the wooden staff across the shoulders, paying other people no heed, one goes straight into the thousand-and-ten-thousand peaks!”

To embrace the way is to let oneself be drawn beyond home, consenting to depart from the familiar, the intimate, to venture into the unknown, the uncertain,[148] advancing while having left behind most of what one held dear, simply holding on to his walking staff, as if it were the last thing to be found upon the earth, using its rigidity to support his own flesh and resist the downward pull of the planet, impeding an ascent away from the world of men. The staff is held perpendicular to the horizon, to the face of the earth itself, showing its nature as a tool of resistance to its omnipresent force, an ally of the life that attempts to gain freedom from the realms above and below.

The way is indeed full of obstacles, replete with stumbling blocks, but the journey allows the traveler to let himself be dispossessed by the earth and the sky. What burdens him gradually falls to the ground and is left behind, leaving him less and less dependent upon the assistance of the walking staff, feeling lighter day by day. His own self does not gain strength while on the road. On the contrary, IT is eroded by the gravel

[148] See: Yamada, Kou’un, *Hekiganroku (Blue Cliff Record)* [Unpublished manuscript]: “‘On the way’ [toji] is the opposite of ‘at home’ [kasha, or ‘in one’s own house’]. If you leave your home and go somewhere else, you are ‘on the way.’” Original Japanese: 「途路は途ということだが、途路と家舎ということがある。自分の家のこと、その家を出て外に行く途中のことを途路と言い」From: 山田耕雲。《碧岩集提唱山田耕雲》。[Unpublished manuscript].

beneath his feet and the dusty winds blowing upon his skin, increasingly becoming no-thing, a shadow passing upon the earth.

One day, the road nonetheless appears to end. The ascent has led him to the highest peak, and he then suddenly realizes that he is alone there, and that he is surrounded by the most absolute emptiness. The stars twinkle during the clear nights, and the sun tans his skin during the day, without the tiniest spot of shade to escape the heavenly fire, but he sees only no-thing, having forgotten his eyes on the road, simply rejoicing in the numbing of his senses and his reason, leaving him at peace, feeling the autumn breeze gently embracing him, showing him the true essence of the heavens around him. He then slowly grows familiar with no-thing-ness itself. He lets his self be pierced through the heavenly radiance and carried away by the soft but vigorous hands of the mountain winds. The staff that supported his ascent now has no one to hold it, and it thus falls down to the ground, having served its purpose.

When the traveler has forgotten himself in the empty landscape of the high peak, on the top of the earth, facing the immensity of the skies, nonetheless comes a realization: when the self has been reduced to naught, all that remains is the vision of others, the multitude of dwellers of the world down below, those on the way to the peak, struggling on the road, in desperate need of support and guidance. The peak then ceases to appear as the end of the way. It now shows itself as a new beginning, the locus of a rebirth of the traveler, who has made the world his home, made the earth his world, and made others his own kin and his very self. Born anew, he then picks up the staff lying on the ground, and boldly holds it across his shoulders, becoming the support of the staff that once supported him, keeping it parallel to the earth, in such a position that it would appear like a hindrance rather than a help. Ignoring the apparent folly of his appearance in the eyes of the world, he then runs straight into the ten thousand things forming this world, ready to crash against them, to clear away the path, casting every stumbling block away, while he lets his flesh penetrate the earth itself, becoming the peak to which the children of the future will ascend, where they will receive the revelation of their own nature, before they themselves become thousands of other peaks adorning the face of the earth, under the clear starry sky, without boundaries between them, forming the whole of the earth, like waves standing out from the sea, appearing and disappearing, without names, without memories of them, and yet perfectly representing the truth of all that is.

Case 178 —Zhaozhou's Giant Radishes —
趙州大蘿卜頭

Source: The Blue Cliff Record Case 30.

【中】

jǔ sēng wèn zhào zhōu chéng wén hé shàng qīn jiàn nán quán shì
舉。僧問 趙州：「承聞[1] 和尚親[2] 見 南泉，是
fǒu zhōu yún zhèn zhōu chū dà luó bo tóu
否。」 州 云：「鎮州出大蘿蔔頭[3] 。」

[1] 【承聞】 [chéng wén]: "to have heard."

[2] 【親】 S:【亲】 [qìng or qīn]: "in person."

[3] 【蘿蔔頭】 S:【萝卜头】 [luó bo tóu]: "a radish head."

【日】

こ そう じょうしゅう と うけたまわ き おしょうした
舉す。僧、趙州に問う、「承り聞く、和尚親し
なんせん まみ ぜ しゅういわ ちんしゅう だい
く南泉に見ゆと、是なりや。」州云く、「鎮州に大
ら ふとう い
蘿蔔頭を出だす。」

【E】

A monk asked Zhaozhou: "One has heard that the Master personally met Nanquan. Is it true or not?" Zhaozhou replied: "The province of Zhen produces giant radishes."[1]

[1] "Radishes": It would seem that the province of Zhen was famous for its large radishes. This province was also the region where Zhaozhou's monastery was located.

To live in the world is to cleave the heavens with the sword of reason at each instant. The truth is thereby separated from falsehood. The great is set apart from the small, the renowned from the unknown, with man yet remaining blind to the origin and the nature of such distinctions. He sees them as inherent properties of what surrounds him, failing to perceive the role played by his perception and his reason in such a carving of the perfection of what is encompassed by the heavens. He therefore obstinately pursues what has value in the eye of this world, wanting to

climb the ladders leading to its top, and seeks the company of those acquainted with the architects who determine the way it will continue to be constructed, and so engulfed in the affairs of this world, he does not notice how shaky is its ground, and how weak are its foundations.

One may, all the same, be valued by a world without caring for it, or without even being acquainted with its activity. One may enjoy fame among men, and be praised for one's position among them, without even being present in this world, preferring the solitary retreats in the mountains or staying among the needy, but only caring for their guidance, impassively leading them out of the mire of the ten thousand things from which they strenuously try to extract themselves. When one who has yet to perceive the fallacy of the oppositions through which he sees the earth and the sky inquires about them, asking a famous wise-man who sees through them all, whose gaze pierces through all things and reveals the essence of being itself, he only receives a perplexing answer: "This province is famous for producing giant radishes." Asking about the world, he is brought to the earth, his nose in the dark, fertile soil, his eyes made to contemplate what comes out of it, painstakingly grown after months of attentive nurturing, its seed carefully planted by the hand of the farmer, its roots diligently watered by the clouds, its leaves profusely fed with the heavenly fire, and now ready to be cooked and ingested, becoming the source of our continuing existence, our perduring upon the luxuriant face of the earth. Giant or small, famous or unknown, this has no bearing upon our lives. If any attention should be paid, it should be to this fruit of the earth, which is the whole of life, the whole of the earth, the entirety of being, held in our hands, without any frontier between it and our body. Any other answer would be a straying away, showing oneself empty-headed, and no more intelligent than a radish. And yet, this radish also represents the truth of being itself, what man is called to realize, the fact that this product of the earth is in perfect harmony with the way of the sky, having no will, no mind, being no-thing-ness itself. Enlightenment is in our hands, and it is our hands. It is the radish growing in the soil, the leaves falling at the end of the summer, the raindrops striking the tiles of our roof, the grains of rice in our bowl. These have no name, no fame, and they are not valued by the world, and yet they incarnate the ultimate truth, and can teach more than the most renowned scholar, guiding him to his original home, where he will be at peace.

Case 179 —Changsha Walks in the Mountain —長沙游山

Source: The Blue Cliff Record Case 36.

【中】

jǔ chángshā yí rì yóu shān guī zhì mén shǒu shǒu zuò wèn hé
舉。長沙 一日遊山，歸至門首。首座問：「和
shàng shén me chù qù lái shā yún yóu shān lái shǒu zuò yún dào
尚什麼處去來。」沙 云：「遊山來。」首座云：「到
shén me chù lái shā yún shī suí fāng cǎo qù yòu zhú luò huā
什麼處來。」沙 云：「始隨芳草[1] 去，又逐落花
huí zuò yún dà sì chūn yì shā yún yě shèng qiū lù
回。」座 云：「大似春意[2] 。」沙 云：「也勝秋露[3]
dī fú qú xuě dòu zhuó yǔ yún xiè dá huà
滴芙蕖[4] 。」雪竇 著語云：「謝答話。」

[1] 【芳草】 [fāng cǎo]: “scented grass.”

[2] 【春意】 [chūn yì]: “the beginning of spring.” It may also, in other contexts, mean “thoughts of love.”

[3] 【秋露】 [qiū lù]: “the autumn dew.”

[4] 【芙蕖】 [fú qú]: “a lotus flower.”

【日】

こ ちょうさ いちじつ ゆさん かえ かどぐち いた
舉す。長沙、一日遊山して、歸って門首に至る。
しゅそ と おしょう いず こ ゆ き さ
首座問う、「和尚什麼處にか去き來たれる。」沙
いわ ゆさん き しゅそ いわ いず こ
云く、「遊山し來たる。」首座云く、「什麼處にか
いた き さ いわ はじ ほうそう したが
到り來たれる。」沙云く、「始めは芳草に隨って
ゆ ま らっか お かえ ざ いわ おお
去き、又た落花を逐って回る。」座云く、「大いに
しゅんい に さ いわ ま あきつゆ ふ きょ したた
春意に似たり。」沙云く、「也た秋露の芙蕖に滴る
まさ せっちょうじゃくご いわ とう わ しゃ
に勝れり。」雪竇著語して云く、「答話を謝す。」

【E】

One day, Changsha went for a walk in the mountains, and when he returned to the gate, the head monk said, “Where does the Master come from?” Changsha said, “From having a walk in the mountains.” The head monk said, “How far did you go?” Changsha said, “First, I went, following the scented grass, and then came back, guided by the falling flowers.” The

head monk said, “It looks very much like a spring mood.” Changsha said, “It is better than the autumn dew dripping on the lotus flower.” (Xuedou commented: “One is grateful for that answer.”)

Temples and monasteries appear to be places where the way of the sky is to be found, as those eager to discover it are seen flocking to them, leaving behind their earthly possessions, their families and beloved, their former beliefs and their ideas, to let themselves be shaped by the teachings preached within their walls and the practice followed within their halls. This appearance is nonetheless deceitful. These places are no closer or farther than any other places in man’s world. Their worth does not reside in the beauty of their roofs or the intricacy of the ornaments of the temples. The statues are valueless, and the libraries are just piles of meaningless scribbles on the earth. What shines within these dark places of the world is the body of those who have seen the truth of the earth and the sky, pierced through all the walls of the world with their eyes, witnesses of the no-thing-ness that is the ground of all that is, and more importantly, they have taken upon themselves the duty of leading others to the realization of the way itself. How heavy the burden of these men is, yet they consider it as light as a feather. They are condemned to plunge themselves daily into the mire of the futility of the disciples, of the pettiness of their brethren, and of the ingratitude of the recipients of their selfless assistance. They are seen as the pillars of these temples and monasteries, but few are those who can discern what gives them this strength and this resilience. The disciples indeed are often blind to the source of the power of the men of the way, to the spring out of which they draw their zeal and vigor: the earth itself, which they see every day, but which they have yet to discover.

The man of the way is one with the earth and the world. He incarnates their unity, and through his agency, one can flow into the other. The words that come out of his mouth have the scent of the spring flowers, the brightness of the summer sun, the rich palette of colors of the autumn leaves, the complex sound of the winter snow trampled by our feet. His speech brings the worldly to the earth, appealing to the senses of those lost in their thoughts with verses and poetic imagery. Furthermore, each step he takes upon the earth, each movement of his flesh, is laden with the most profound meaning that can be found within the world. He brings the world itself to the earth, expressing himself with his body, matter itself. He plays with words as well as with flowers. He is at home in the world as well as upon the earth, not letting himself be absorbed and blinded by either of them.

When the burden of the world begins to weigh him down, he seeks refuge upon the earth, escaping the temple's hall, fleeing the walls of the monastery to stroll in the mountains. There, he enjoys a solitary retreat under the clear sky, immersed in the fragrance of life. His eyes feast upon the vivid display all around him, as his ears are filled with the delicate whisper of the leaves and the melodious tunes of the birds. Those who have yet to perceive the strife between earth and world, the necessity of unceasingly leaping between both to prevent their enslavement and blinding, will nonetheless let a foul torrent come out of their mouth, bitter words of rebuke addressed to the master returning from his mountainous exploration, seeing that the central pillar of the congregation prefers to spend time wandering in nature to attending to the need of his flock, ignorant of the titanic effort deployed by this pillar of the world. Hearing these hurtful words, the master does not let himself be dragged into the mire of the world. Only gentle, poetic words then come out of his mouth, reflections of the clarity of his mind, deflecting the insidious assaults and pointing out the way itself, all around them, within the reach of all the disciples, at all times, if only they opened themselves to the signs of the earth and the sky.

Case 180 —Nice Snow-Flakes —好雪片片

Source: The Blue Cliff Record Case 42.

【中】

jū páng jū shì cí yào shān shān mìng shí rén chán kè xiāng
舉。龐 居士[1] 辭藥山，山 命十人禪客，相
sòng zhì mén shǒu jū shì zhǐ kōng zhōng xuě yún hǎo xuě piàn piàn bú luò
送至門首。居士指空中雪 云：「好雪片片，不落
bié chù shí yǒu quán chán kè yún luò zài shén me chù shì dǎ yì
別處。」時有全 禪客云：「落在什麼處。」士打一
zhǎng quán yún jū shì yě bù dé cǎo cǎo shì yún rǔ rèn
掌。全 云：「居士也不得草草[2] 。」士云：「汝恁
me chēng chán kè yán lǎo zǐ wèi fàng rǔ zài quán yún jū shì
麼稱禪客，閻老子[3] 未放汝在。」全 云：「居士
zuò me shēng shì yòu dǎ yì zhǎng yún yǎn jiàn rú máng kǒu shuō rú yǎ
作麼生。」士又打一掌云：「眼見如盲，口說如啞。」
xuě dòu bié yún chū wèn chù dàn wò xuě tuán biàn dǎ
雪竇 別云：「初問處但握雪團便打。」

[1] 【居士】 [jū shì]: A title used for a person who was virtuous and talented but lived in seclusion and did not hold an official position.

[2] 【草草】 [cǎo cǎo]: "carelessly" / "hastily."

[3] 【閻老子】 [yán lǎo zǐ]: designates the Great King of Hell who judges the dead, 閻羅

王 [yán luó wáng] in Chinese, यमराज [Yamarāja] in Sanskrit. In Japan, he is called 閻魔大王 (えんまだいおう, [enmadaiou]).

【日】

舉す。龐居士、藥山を辞す。山、十人の禪客に命じて相送りて門首に至らしむ。居士、空中の雪を指さして云く、「好雪、片片別處に落ちず。」時に全禪客有り、云く、「什麼處にか落在する。」士打つこと一掌。全云く、「居士也た草草なることを得ざれ。」士云く、「汝恁麼に禪客と稱すれば、閻老子未だ汝を放さざる在。」全云く、「居士は作麼生。」士又た打つこと一掌。云く、「眼は見るも盲の如く、口は說うも唖の如し。」雪竇別して云く、「初問の處に但だ雪團を握って便ち打たん。」

【E】

The Venerable Pang was leaving Yaoshan. Yaoshan then ordered ten of his students of Zen to see Pang off at the temple gate. Pang pointed to the falling snow in the air and said, “Nice snowflakes! They don’t fall on any other place.” At this moment, a student named Quan said, “Where do they fall?” The Venerable slapped him. Quan said, “Venerable, don’t be so hasty.” The Venerable said, “[You behave] like this, and you call yourself a student of Zen! The old Yama[1] [, the King of Hell,] will never release you!” Quan said, “What about the Venerable?” Pang slapped him once more and said, “These eyes see as much as a blind man! This mouth speaks as well as the mouth of a dumb man!” (Xuedou added: “At the first question, I immediately would have made a snowball and thrown it at him!”)

[1] "Old Yama": See note 3 of the Chinese text.

Once the leafy garment of the forest has fallen to the ground and has taken its dark tint, soaked by the rains and the mud, the trees are left in their nakedness, exposed to the icy embrace of the sky. The scrawny branches welcome the first snowflakes delicately gliding down from the loftiest clouds, leaving their cold, six-pointed imprint upon the land. These cottony bits of clouds are all unique. Without will or plan, they let themselves be carried to the place assigned to them by the commotion of the totality of the heavens,[149] by the turning of the whole celestial mechanism, with the entire course of the sky involved in the determination of its trajectory and its destination.

The snowflakes do not fall in any other place. They are here, now, and this instant will never occur again. Never again will these snowflakes take the same path and fall before our eyes. If we consider that they may have fallen somewhere else, and at another time, this means that we are blind, deceived by the illusions inhabiting our mind, forming the world in which we spend our days. Indeed, if one sees this landscape for what it is, there is no other place, no other time, only here and now. To oppose the "here" and "there" is to be a prisoner of the world, incapable of perceiving the seamless essence of the skies, the nature of the snow. These snowflakes before our eyes, they are the whole of the earth, the totality of the skies, without origin or destination, without maker or destroyer. They are the all-pervading truth, unadulterated, unbounded.

If someone considers that this snowfall only occurs "here," he thus deserves to be firmly grasped by the shoulders and vigorously slapped, so that the sleeper would awaken to the nature of being, and see what lies under the carpet of illusions covering his world. Through pain and astonishment, he is extracted from this world and thrown onto the naked earth, commanded to observe it attentively, with an empty mind, free from thoughts and things having no ground in the truth of the way of the sky. Gathering snowflakes into a ball, the guide throws it at the faces of the lost ones, letting the snow melt down their neck, letting them feel how the individual snowflakes are now frigid water warmed by their skin. What was once an array of snowflakes now forms an indistinguishable whole, which cannot even be separated from their own bodies, having become part of them. This water is the same as the one pervading their flesh, the same as the drops of rain that allowed the trees

[149] See: 吳平。《新譯碧巖集》。台北：三民書局股份有限公司, 2005: 「龐居士說雪片『不落別處』，這是說的大道自然，不用計較、心慮，所以落在哪裡都一樣，就沒有此處、彼處的分別。」

to grow, and the same as the rivers and the sea in which they plunge their bodies, before this water is carried to the clouds to once again become snow. The uniqueness of the snowflake is thus revealed to be only a veil concealing its true nature, just as the things of the world veil the seamless truth of the skies. We may cut the year into seasons, and discern the snowflake from the ocean, but this is but an arbitrary mirage of our own making, aimed at allowing us to partly grasp the unfathomable, to become masters over a small portion of nature. One who appropriates the whole truth of the skies would, despite this fact, be blind and see only no-thing. His mouth would not utter a word, only meaningless sounds mingled with silence. Awakened and blind, sleeping and having visions, both states are, however, themselves like the snow and the water, only complementary facets of a single truth.

Case 181 —Life or Death 一生耶死耶

Source: The Blue Cliff Record Case 55.

【中】

jǔ dào wú yǔ jiàn yuán zhì yī jiā diào wèi yuán pāi guān
舉。道吾與漸源至一家弔慰[1]。源拍棺[2]
yún shēng yé sǐ yé wú yún shēng yě bú dào sǐ yě
云：「生邪[3]，死邪。」吾云：「生也不道，死也
bú dào yuán yún wèi shén me bú dào wú yún bú dào
不道。」源云：「為什麼不道。」吾云：「不道，
bú dào huí zhì zhōng lù yuán yún hé shàng kuài yǔ mǒu jiǎ dào ruò
不道。」回至中路，源云：「和尚快與某甲道，若
bú dào dǎ hé shàng qù yě wú yún dǎ jí rèn dǎ dào jí
不道，打和尚去也。」吾云：「打即任打，道即
bú dào yuán biàn dǎ hòu dào wú qiān huà yuán dào shí shuāng
不道。」源便打。後道吾遷化[4]，源到石霜，
jǔ sì qián huà shuāng yún shēng yě bú dào sǐ yě bú dào yuán
舉似前話。霜云：「生也不道，死也不道。」源
yún wèi shén me bú dào shuāng yún bú dào bú dào yuán
云：「為什麼不道。」霜云：「不道，不道。」源
yú yán xià yǒu xīng yuán yí rì jiāng qiāo zi yú fǎ táng shàng cóng dōng
於言[5]下有省。源一日將鍬子，於法堂上，從東
guò xī cóng xī guò dōng shuāng yún zuò shén me yuán yún mì
過西，從西過東。霜云：「作什麼。」源云：「覓
xiān shī líng gǔ shuāng yún hóng bō hào miǎo bái làng tāo tiān
先師靈骨[6]。」霜云：「洪波浩渺[7]，白浪滔天[8]
mì shén me xiān shī líng gǔ xuě dòu zhuó yǔ yún cāng tiān cāng
，覓什麼先師靈骨。」雪竇著語云：「蒼天[9]，蒼
tiān yuán yún zhèng hǎo zhuó lì tài yuán fú yún xiān shī
天。」源云：「正好著力[10]。」太原孚云：「先師

líng gǔ yóu zài
靈骨猶在。」

[1] 【弔慰】 S:【吊慰】 [diào wèi]: “to offer condolences.”

[2] 【棺】 [guān]: “a coffin.”

[3] 【邪】 [yé]: A final particle expressing exclamation or interrogation, similar to 耶 [yé].

[4] 【遷化】: [qiān huà] “the death [of a monk].”

[5] 【鍬】 S:【锹】 [qiāo]: “a hoe.”

[6] 【靈骨】 S:【灵骨】 [líng gǔ]: “the bones [of a venerable person].”

[7] 【浩渺】 [hào miǎo]: “vast” / “extended.”

[8] 【滔天】 [tāo tiān]: “[a liquid] filling the sky”; 滔 [tāo]: “to overflow.”

[9] 【蒼天】 S:【苍天】 [cāng tiān]: “the firmament.”

[10] 【正好著力】 [zhèng hǎo zhuó lì]: An idiomatic phrase meaning “thank you for your teaching.” It literally means: “[you] have expended your strength.”

【日】

舉す。道吾、漸源と一家に至って弔慰す。源、棺を拍って云く、「生か死か。」吾云く、「生とも道わじ、死とも道わじ。」源云く、「爲什麼にか道わざる。」吾云く、「道わじ、道わじ。」回りて中路に至り、源云く、「和尚快かに某甲が與に道え。若し道わずんば、和尚を打ち去らん。」吾云く、「打つことは便ち打つに任すも、道うことは即ち道わじ。」源便ち打つ。後に道吾遷化す。現、石霜に到って、前話を舉似す。霜云く、「生とも道わじ、死とも道わじ。」源云く、「爲什麼にか道わざる。」霜云く、「道わじ、道わじ。」源、言下に省有り。源、一日鍬子を將って法堂上を東より西に過り、西より東に過る。霜云く、「什麼をか作す。」源

云く、「先師の靈骨を覓む。」霜云く、「洪波浩渺、白浪滔天、什麼の先師の靈骨をか覓めん。」雪竇著語して云く、「蒼天、蒼天。」源云く、「正に好し、力を著くるに。」太原の孚云く、「先師の靈骨、猶お在り。」

【E】

Daowu and Jianyuan came to a house to offer condolences. Jianyuan tapped on the coffin and said, “Life or death?” Daowu said, “I won’t say ‘life’, and I won’t say ‘death’!” Jianyuan said, “Why won’t you?” Daowu said, “I won’t say! I won’t say!” On the way back, Jianyuan said, “Master, please tell it now to this one here! If you don’t say it, this one here will hit the Master.” Daowu said, “If you want to hit me, hit me, but I will not say it.” Jianyuan then hit him.

After a while, Daowu passed away. Jianyuan went to Shishuang and told him about the aforementioned conversation. Shishuang said, “I won’t say ‘life’, and I won’t say ‘death.’” Jianyuan said, “Why don’t you?” Shishuang said, “I won’t say! I won’t say!” Hearing these words, Jianyuan gained an insight.

One day, Jianyuan took a hoe, entered the meditation hall, and walked from east to west and from west to east. Shishuang said, “What is this one doing?” Jianyuan said, “I am looking for the sacred bones of the late master.” Shishuang said, “Giant waves extending to the horizon! White billows reaching up to the heavens! What kind of sacred bones of the late master is this one looking for?!” (Xuedou commented: “Heavens! heavens!”) Jianyuan said, “One has put in just the right amount of effort.” Taiyuanfu said, “The sacred bones of the late master are still there.”

———

Life is like fire, a grand bewitching of the earth, a superb chain-

reaction that propagates itself on the surface of the planet, unabatedly passing through the ages, like a wildfire, at times fanned by the wind and at others quenched by the rain, always in harmony with the forces ruling the sky. Inflamed or consumed, burning or reduced to ashes, the earth experiences transformations, but it, despite this fact, remains faithful to its nature, and nothing is created, nothing destroyed. So is life as well. The complex piece of machinery animating our flesh emerges out of the machinery of our parents, and one day it simply breaks down, with the innumerable elements forming it collapsing. Our body yet remains. Our flesh is absorbed by other living things and by the soil, our bones are buried in the dust, but one cannot trace a clear, objective line between us and the rest of the earth and the sky. The contrast between life and death is only a practical distinction, tied to the use people have for other dwellers of their common world. When the essence is seen, one then realizes that he never was born and that he will never die. He was already here when the heavens themselves were unfolded, and he will remain when they will collapse upon themselves, even though no answer comes if called upon.[150]

When the cadaver of an old friend is about to be buried or burnt, therefore comes an appropriate time to ask him, while tapping on the coffin: "Life or death?" The resulting silence speaks more truly than any possible word. This is life. This is death. This is both and neither. It is the opportunity to transcend all oppositions and let oneself be dissolved in the heavens, ceasing to be a thing of the world, to simply become no more and no less than the way of the sky itself, which he always was already. One who has only taken a glance at the weaknesses of the foundations of the world he inhabits and has yet to appropriate the edge between earth and world will then perceive the words "life" and "death" as a trap, a chain preventing his liberation from the yoke of deceitful words and concepts. He will then refuse to answer the question and will even shudder at the mere utterance of such vulgar words. Doing so, he for all that only demonstrates the power that these words hold over him. The man of the way fears nothing, because he embodies no-thing. He juggles with words like with red-hot iron balls, never letting his conduct be dictated by the arbitrariness of the world, but neither fearing to obey it if he is led to it. One may thus loudly declare: "The cadaver of my friend is very much alive! I myself am dead!" He who is already dead indeed has no fear for his own life, and thus boldly leaps over all the pitfalls created by the sons of men, wielding the tools created to deceive and using them to shatter the fetters of the prisoners. He uses words as if

[150]See: Yamada, Kou'un, *Hekiganroku (Blue Cliff Record)* [Unpublished manuscript]: "Yamamoto Gempô Roshi, whenever anyone died, would say, 'He was not born, neither did he ever die. He is gone nowhere, he is right here. Don't ask him, he will not answer.'" Original Japanese: 「山本玄峰老師が人が亡くなった時に『生れもせねば死にもせぬ、どこへも行かぬここにおる、問うてくれるな物は言わぬぞ』」 From: 山田耕雲。《碧岩集提唱山田耕雲》。[Unpublished manuscript].

they were daggers and swords, piercing through all delusions, rending the veil covering the firmament, revealing its magnificence to all the dwellers of the world.

Once the body of the old friend has been cremated, the blind among his acquaintances may, however, hold on to the pieces of bones left behind, seeing in them what remains of the deceased, but those whose eyes are open then immediately trample them with their feet, crushing them to dust, scattering them to the winds and throwing them in the sea, for they know that their friend is the giant waves extending to the horizon, the white billows reaching up to the heavens! These are the sacred relics of the masters of yore that should be honored. Prostrating toward the earth, toward the sky, toward oneself, one pays homage to all that was, is, and will be, and he sees the eyes of his friend in the sun and the moon, his arms in the autumn breeze chilling his skin, his flesh in the earth under his feet, seeing also himself in these eyes, knowing that as there is no life or death, there is no "me" and "you."

Case 182 —What Is the Language Used by the Tathagata —作么生是如來語

Source: The Blue Cliff Record Case 95.

【中】

jǔ cháng qìng yǒu shí yún nìng shuō ā luó hàn yǒu sān dú
舉。長慶 有時云：「寧[1] 說阿羅漢[2] 有三毒[3]
bù shuō rú lái yǒu èr zhǒng yǔ bú dào rú lái wú yǔ zhǐ shì wú
，不說如來 有二種語。不道如來 無語，只是無
èr zhǒng yǔ bǎo fú yún zuò me shēng shì rú lái yǔ qìng
二種語。」保福 云：「作麼生是如來 語。」慶
yún lóng rén zhēng dé wén bǎo fú yún qíng zhī ěr xiàng dì èr
云：「聾人爭得聞。」保福 云：「情知[4] 爾向第二
tóu dào qìng yún zuò me shēng shì rú lái yǔ bǎo fú
頭道[5] 。」慶 云：「作麼生是如來 語。」保福
yún chī chá qù
云：「喫茶去。」

[1] 【寧】 S:【宁】 [nìng]: "if one would." Pronounced [níng] in Taiwan.

[2] 【阿羅漢】 S:【阿罗汉】 [ā luó hàn]: "an arhat." A man who is free of "the three poisons": covetousness, anger, and folly.

[3] 【三毒】 [sān dú]: "the three poisons". In Buddhism, the three poisons are: covetousness, anger, and folly.

[4] 【情知】 [qíng zhī]: "to clearly know."

[5] 【爾向第二頭道】 [ěr xiàng dì èr tóu dào]: “you speak oriented toward the second extremity.”

【日】

舉す。長慶有る時云く、「寧ろ阿羅漢に三毒有りと說うも、如來に二種の語有りと說わず。如來に語無しとは道わず、只だ是れ二種の語無し。」保福云く、「作麼生か是れ如來の語。」慶云く、「聾人爭か聞くを得ん。」保福云く、「情に知れり、爾が第二頭に向いて道うを。」慶云く、「作麼生か是れ如來の語。」保福云く、「喫茶去。」

【E】

One day, Changching said, “Even if one says that an arhat[1] still has ‘the three poisons[2] ‘ [affecting his mind], one should not say that the Tathagata has two sorts of language. I do not say that the Tathagata does not use language, but only say that he does not have two kinds of language.” Baofu said, “What is the language [used] by the Tathagata?” Changching said, “How can a deaf man hear?” Baofu said, “It is now clear that you speak oriented toward the second extremity.” Changching said, “What is the language [used by] the Tathagata?” Baofu said, “Have some tea.”

[1] “Arhat”: See note 2 of the Chinese text.

[2] “The Three Poisons”: See note 3 of the Chinese text.

One may say that the awakened is asleep, or that the sun is dark, but one should not say that the man who is one with the way of the sky, coming *as he is*, without artifice or exhibiting falsehood, embodying instead the ineffable truth with his entire being, has two sorts of language.

To embrace apparent contradictions is indeed to break free from the smothering constraints of the world, to show that we do not consider

ourselves forced to abide by its arbitrary rules, to respect its imperfect order, and to submit to its deceitful representations. It exposes the inconspicuous cracks in the foundations upon which man has built every single thing surrounding him for all eyes to see, but at the same time, it may represent an endorsement of the falsehood of this world, of the mirages ensnaring its inhabitants. The contradictory sentences coming out of his mouth may indeed confuse and lead astray those who have yet to perceive the nature of their predicament, their condition as slaves of things, servants of the world of men. There is therefore another, more genuine way to lead the deluded out of their mental prison.

The one who comes *as he is* does not need to make use of the falsehood of the world of men. He is the way of the sky, and he does not need to utter a single word to lead mankind toward its destiny. His mouth may open, his lips may move, and sounds may come out as a result, but he does not have anything to say, anything to teach. He has nothing, not even no-thing-ness itself, and this is what his face shows to the world, even to the blind, and it is what his speech demonstrates, understood clearly, even by the deaf. With a mind pure and clear, he does not participate in the vain quarrels of words that enthrall the intellectuals and the scholars. He does not see the extremities, the opposite poles striving against one another, but rather only seizes the whole and throws it away into the bottomless abyss. His existence is very down to earth. His eyes are turned toward what is in front of him, without any trace of reflection. He is a drop in the flow of a river, impossible to trace, following the contours of the earth as it lets itself be carried by its downward pull, heading toward the immensity of the ocean.

Only the child feels compelled to play games when encountering someone, eager to test his nature and the limits of his mind or his flesh. The old man has played enough of these games, and he sees through the eyes of the one standing before him, and sees himself in them. The words he uses are thus plain, without traps or tricks. His intelligence is concealed under a thick cloak of benevolence, and he thus appears simple in the eyes of the learned. He is the muddy field after the harvest, letting itself be trampled by the feet of the men of the world, receiving their imprint, impassively welcoming their influence, but he is also a magpie roaming the countryside as well as the streets of the large city, robbing men of the things they do not need, and offering other things to them in their stead, things that they do not necessarily need either, but that are meant to divert their attention from the futile facets of the world, the endless arguments based on illusory oppositions, and to make them notice the truth of the earth in the most common things. Pouring a cup of boiling water in front of them, soaking tea leaves inside it, they offer a wondrous display of the essence of life dissolved in the transparent liquid, with steam rising up into the air before joining the

clouds high above their heads. This delicious concoction runs down their throats, delighting their palate and warming their bellies, and if they let themselves be penetrated by this experience, they will see the way more clearly than through a thousand years of meticulous arguing and passionate debates.

Case 183 —Dizang Plants Rice —地藏種田

Source: The Book of Serenity Case 12.

【中】

jǔ dì zàng wèn xiū shān zhǔ shén chù lái xiū yún nán
舉。地藏 問 脩山主:「甚處來。」脩 云:「南
fāng lái zàng yún nán fāng jìn rì fó fǎ rú hé xiū yún shāng
方來。」藏 云:「南方近日佛法如何。」脩 云:「商
liáng hào hào dì zàng yún zhēng rú wǒ zhè lǐ zhǒng tián bó fàn
量浩浩[1] 。」地藏 云:「爭如[2] 我這裏種田博[3] 飯
chī xiū yún zhēng nài sān jiè hé zàng yún ěr huàn
喫。」脩 云:「爭奈[4] 三界[5] 何。」藏 云:「爾喚
shén me zuò sān jiè
甚麼作三界。」

[1] 【浩浩】 [hào hào]: "torrential [floods]."

[2] 【爭如】 S:【争如】 [zhēng rú]: "how can it be compared [to something else]."

[3] 【博】 [bó]: "to provide plenty [of something]."

[4] 【爭奈】 S:【争奈】 [zhēng nài]: "what can [something] do?"

[5] 【三界】 [sān jiè]: "the three worlds." Usually designates the world of desire (欲界), the sensory world (色界), and the extra-sensory world (無色界). It may also designate the past, the present, and the future.

【日】

こ ちぞう しゅざんしゅ と いず ところ
舉す。地藏、脩山主に問う、「甚れの處より
きた しゅいわ なんぼう きた ぞういわ なんぼう
來る。」脩云く、「南方より來る。」藏云く、「南方
きんじつぶっぽう いか しゅいわ しょうりょうこうち ぞう
近日佛法如何ん。」脩云く、「商量浩浩地。」藏
いわ いかで し わ しゃり でん う はん まい
云く、「爭か如かん我が這裏、田を種え飯を搏め
きっ しゅいわ さんがい いかん ぞう
て喫せんには。」脩云く、「三界を爭奈何せん。」藏
いわ なんじ なに よ さんがい な
云く、「爾、甚麼を喚んでか三界と作す。」

【E】

Dizang asked Xiushanzhu: "Where have you come from?" Xiushanzhu said, "From the South." Dizang said, "How is Buddhism in the South these days?" Xiushanzhu said, "There is a torrent of discussions." Dizang said, "How could that match my planting of the rice fields here, which provide us with plenty of food to eat?" Xiushanzhu said, "What can that do for the three worlds,[1] then?" Dizang said, "What do you call 'the three worlds'?"

[1] "The three worlds": See note 5 of the Chinese text.

The towers reaching for the sky and the serpentine alleys of the cities are the channels through which a turbulent torrent of words and characters is constantly flowing, soaking the minds of men with a profusion of thoughts and images, shaping their being and causing them to believe that this flood in which they are plunged is all that there is. They do not see the tiny and yet piercing radiance of Polaris standing out from the darkness of the night sky, but rather see "the north." They are oblivious to the setting sun, to the innumerable brushstrokes painting the heavens with harmonious shades mingling gold, silver, emerald, sapphire, and ruby in a marvelous display offered graciously to their eyes, but rather simply see "the west." More serious than this, many are unable to distinguish the signifier from the signified, the world from the earth and the sky that it represents. They talk endlessly about the ground of being, the fundamental essence of all that is, and genuinely believe that they are dealing with this ground, this essence itself, whereas they are merely playing with signs, ignorant of what they were meant to represent when they were forged by men more experienced than them, acquainted with the truth underlying these words. They live in a world cleaved in multiple ways. They oppose the past to the future, searching in the words of those who enjoyed fame in distant eras the key to ensuring a bright future for themselves and their loved ones, and leave their own traces upon parchment and tablets, hoping that those to come will recognize their wisdom and be inspired by their walk of life. They highlight the contrast between death and life, thinking that their being is transient, that they were created and born at a specific point in time and that their days are counted, thinking that they will soon face annihilation and thus must make the most of their precious instants in this world. They see the lost ones as failing at their existence, unlike those who are saved, those who have climbed the heights of the world, and seen what lies beyond

it, but this worldview is only the fruit of their mind, and they fail to experience the truth of their presence, of their being, of their condition, which is not tied to any contrast or opposition, but rather only to an experience.

It is when the past collapses together with the future that the present can appear in its truth. When life and death both disappear, the truth of being can be revealed, and these vulgar concepts can be forgotten. When the darkness becomes one with the light; when knowledge is married with ignorance, then there is no enlightenment or delusion, only existence, as one is endowed with the awareness of the essence of being. When all words and concepts have been blown away by the tempest stirred up in the loftiest heaven; when the skyscrapers have been toppled to the ground and the streets emptied of all the things cluttering them, then the essence of our existence naturally comes to the forefront. The fundamental ground of being appears in the most basic needs of our flesh and our mind. The growling of our belly reminds us that we live through the ingestion of other living things, themselves brought out of the earth thanks to the rains poured out from the clouds and the light of the sun. Obeying the signs of our body and the instincts carved in the deepest parts of our mind, having no-thing else in mind, what was thought in the towers of words and the rivers of ink may finally be unveiled in our eyes, and we may realize that it was always there. The earth is the most skilled teacher. The skies are the most patient instructors. One only needs to empty the mind and be filled by them for all to become clear.

Case 184 —Yunmen's Mount Sumeru —雲門須彌

Source: The Book of Serenity Case 19.

【中】

jǔ sēng wèn yún mén bù qǐ yí niàn huán yǒu guò yě wú mén
舉。僧問雲門：「不起一念，還有過也。」無門
yún xū mí shān
云：「須彌山[1]。」

[1] 【須彌】 S:【须弥】 [xū mí]: "Mount Meru" (मेरु) / "Sumeru." A sacred mountain in the Buddhist and Jain traditions, considered to represent the center of the world. It often symbolizes the whole of the earth.

【日】

舉(こ)す。僧(そう)、雲門(うんもん)に問(と)う、「不起一念(ふきいちねんかえ)還(とが)って過(あ)有(ま)りや也(な)た無しや。」門(もん)云(いわ)く、「須彌山(しゅみせん)。」

【E】

A monk asked Yunmen: “If not a single thought arises, is there still any [possibility of a] fault?” Yunmen said, “Mount Sumeru.”[1]

[1] “Mount Sumeru”: See note 1 of the Chinese text.

The existence of transgression implies that there are boundaries that delimit the way to go and what falls outside of it, and that these frontiers are perceived by the eyes of men, with their minds identifying this contrast and determining where these frontiers are located. A fault also implies the existence of willpower, as he who has no control over his destiny cannot be blamed for where the turning of the celestial wheels brings him. The dry leaves falling down from the trees when the summer ends cannot be seen as being guilty of any transgression, even if the wind carries them within a sanctuary that is meant to remain immaculate and free of such intrusions of nature. Likewise, a feeble-minded is not considered responsible for his inability to submit to the order of the world of men, as his mind cannot comprehend the consequences of his actions.

When men have deserted the world built by their forefathers, having left behind the countless things that they shaped from the earth and produced with the work of their minds, to lay the foundation of a new form of existence, in which not a single thought will be raised, every single one of their steps will then be taken in the right direction, without them even considering it as something that is right. Each sound they hear passes through their skin and bones, entering their mind freely, before slowly fading away, not leaving any lasting impression. They will not dwell in villages or cities, but rather only see the entirety of the earth and the sky. Without boundaries, without thought, the earth is a single immense mountain whose base encompasses all that is, and whose summit reaches the highest sky. Even the loftiest gusts of wind would not be able to blow over it, and the rain would not penetrate its surface, as it encompasses everything.[151] When there is only one thing, it is as if there were only no-thing. There is no right or wrong, no here and there,

[151] See: 神保如天. 《従容録通解》。東京：無我山房, 1915. Page 155 (Case 19).

no yes and no, only the undivided whole, a giant sphere of jade, perfect and pristine.

When the great mountain has been seen with his own eyes by the pilgrim on the way, the unceasing chatter of those still searching for it then appears as attempts to scratch the jade sphere, to break the whole of the earth like a marble under one's foot. As soon as their mouth opens up, it is the whole mountain that should be thrown into it, shutting up this noisy instrument, silencing this futile blabbering.[152] When there is no space left, when everything is filled to the brim and nothing else can be perceived, it is as if there were nothing, as if one were plunged into absolute emptiness. Then may the fact that the whole is no-thing and that no-thing is the whole finally be realized. The whole of the earth is the emptiness of the skies, and man is both and neither.

Case 185 —Xuansha Reaches the County —玄沙到縣

Source: The Book of Serenity Case 81.

【中】

jǔ xuán shā dào pú tián xiàn bǎi xì yíng zhī cì rì wèn xiǎo táng
舉。玄沙 到蒲田縣。百戲迎之。次日問 小塘
zhǎng lǎo zuó rì xǔ duō xuān nào xiàng shén me chù qù yě xiǎo táng tí
長老：「昨日許多喧鬧。向甚麼處去也。」 小塘 提
qī jiā shā jiǎo shā yún liào tiāo méi jiāo shè
起袈裟[1] 角沙云：「顯挑沒交涉[2] 。」

[1] 【袈裟】 [jiā shā]: "the robe of a monk."

[2] 【顯挑無交涉】 [liào tiāo méi jiāo shè]: The meaning of the word 顯挑 [liào tiāo] is unclear. It probably intensifies the expression 無交涉, meaning "no connection." Yasutani Haku'un defines it as "something distant" (「顯挑ははるかにへだたることだ。」 See: 安谷白雲。《従容録 新装版: 禅の心髄》。東京：春秋社, 2008. Page 440.)

【日】

こ げんしゃ ほでん けん いた ひゃくぎ これ むか
舉す。玄沙蒲田縣に至る、百戲して之を迎う。
じ じつしょうとうちょうろう と さきじつ きょた けんのう なん
次日小塘長老に問う、「昨日許多の喧鬧甚麼の

[152] See: Roloff, Dietrich. *Cong-Rong-Lu – Aufzeichnungen aus der Klause der Gelassenheit: Die 100 Kôan des Shôyôroku.* Windpferd Verlagsgesellschaft mbH, 2008. Page 99: "Yun-men aber stopft mit seinem ‚Berg Sumeru!' diesem Großmaul die ganze Welt in den offenen Mund und setzt zugleich dem Topf der Leerheit den einzig passenden Deckel auf: die Welt als Ganzes, als die Gesamtheit alles Seienden."

<ruby_base="">處に向って去るや。」小塘袈裟角を提起す。沙云く、「</ruby_base>

<ruby_base="">ところ むかって さ しょうとう けさ かく ていき しゃ いわく りょうとうもつこうしょう</ruby_base>

【E】

Xuansha came to Putian county. There were various kinds of entertainment to welcome him. The next day, he asked Elder Xiaotang: “All the revelry of yesterday, where has it gone?” Xiaotang held out the corner of his monastic robe. Xuansha said, “Completely unrelated!”

The course of our lives is an adventure, a long path upon which numerous encounters are made, with people, with landscapes, with objects and events, all of them leaving traces on our memory, some swiftly swept away by the passing of time, while others remain deeply engraved there until our world crumbles into oblivion. One cannot know in advance what form such traces will take, depending on the nature of the events. Indeed, the loud clamor and the vivid displays of the greatest celebrations may belong to the former kind, forgotten as soon as they end, while a quiet, solitary day of contemplation in the desert may leave an indelible trace, and become an indestructible monument erected in one’s mind, cherished for the rest of one’s existence. Man is nonetheless always threatened to fall prey to nostalgia. The cherishing of memories may then become a stumbling block hindering his progress on the path. With eyes turned toward the past or the future, one may forget that he only lives in the present. He has no impact on the past, and if he does not act here and now, he will not shape the future either. A man who knows his own nature, who clearly sees his own predicament, observes his own feet and what is here and now rather than let his gaze lose itself in the horizon. He seizes the corner of his garment, feeling the earth that he is made of and that he carries with him at all times. He is aware that he is plunged into pure presence, grasping every opportunity to experience its fullness, his senses acutely attuned to the inconspicuous signs offered by what is here around him. What is gone is gone, and he lets all things go their own way, refraining from getting attached to them, even the most pleasurable moments, even the most enjoyable things and people. Each blade of grass next to his feet is dancing with the wind in celebration of being, and all the birds in the air sing joyful tunes in honor of their shared presence on the earth, under the sky. The revelry never ceases, as the entirety of the earth and the sky represents a constant celebration, an eternal festival performed in celebration of its existence, of its presence.

To let oneself be pervaded by presence nonetheless does not mean to be blind to the past or failing to envision the future. It rather means that one accurately perceives the fullness of the work of the skies, the entirety of space and time, without chopping it out in a series of discontinuous moments and places. From the very unfolding of the heavens until their folding back, if it ever occurs, they indeed form a continuum, with every single element permanently bound to every other, throughout the entirety of time. The separation into causes and consequences is only a mirage created by the mind so that it may seem to grasp the ungraspable and understand the ineffable. The delimitation between what is here and now and what is gone is equally arbitrary. The songs of yesterday may still ring in our ears, and the corners of our garments may still wave under the impulse of the dances of the last moon, if we succeed in breaking down the walls bounding our presence, letting us feel the way of the sky, throughout time and space, rather than simply exhume memories and cherish traces of the past. The connection between all things will then be clear, as there will not be any thing anymore, only the seamlessness of the skies, the whole of time and space, perceived with the senses, as the present.

Case 186 —Linji Draws a Line —臨濟一畫

Source: The Book of Serenity Case 95.

【中】

jǔ lín jì wèn yuàn zhǔ shén chù lái zhǔ yún zhōu zhōng
舉。臨濟 問院主：「甚處來。」主云：「州中
tiào huáng mī lái jì yún tiào dé jìn ma zhǔ yún tiào dé
糶[1] 黃米來。」濟 云：「糶得盡麼。」主云：「糶得
jìn jì yǐ zhǔ zhàng yí huò yún huán tiào dé zhè gè ma zhǔ biàn
盡。」濟 以拄杖一畫云：「還糶得這箇麼。」主便
hè jì biàn dǎ cì diǎn zuò zhì jǔ qián huà zuò yún yuàn
喝，濟 便打次。典座 至，舉前話座 云：「院
zhǔ bú huì hé shàng yì jì yún ěr yòu zuò me shēng zuò biàn
主不會和尚意。」濟 云：「爾又作麼生。」座 便
lǐ bài jì yì dǎ
禮拜，濟 亦打。

[1] 【糶】 S:【粜】 [tiào]: “to sell grain.”

【日】

こ りんざい いんじゅ と なん ところ
舉す。臨濟、院主に問う、「甚麼の處よりか

來たる。」主云く、「州中に黄米を糶り來る。」濟云く、「糶得し盡すや。」主云く、「糶得し盡す。」濟拄杖を以て一畫して云く、「還って這箇を糶得せんや。主便ち喝す。濟便ち打つ。次に典座至る、前話を擧す。座云く、「院主和尚の意を會せず。」濟云く、「爾又作麼生。」座便ち禮拜す。濟亦打つ。

【E】

Linji asked the temple steward: “Where have you come from?” The temple steward said, “From selling brown rice in the province.” Linji said, “Did you sell all of it?” The steward said, “I sold all of it.” Linji drew a line with his staff and said, “Have you sold this too?” The steward then shouted: “Haa!” Linji then hit him. Later, the monk in charge of the meals came, and Linji told him about the aforementioned conversation. The monk said, “The steward didn’t understand the Master’s intention.” Linji said, “How about you?” The monk made a deep bow. Linji hit him as well.

When we encounter another human being and let a precisely controlled flow of words pass through our mouths and ears, attempting to leave an imprint on the other’s mind as we let ourselves receive the seal of their being, we are nonetheless always facing the possibility of misunderstandings, of a misalignment between what we talk about and what is understood by the other, and we are never able to ascertain the extent of such a gap, such distance between us. One may speak of the essence of one’s being with the same words as one would speak of the daily affairs of the world: “Where do you come from?” “Where are you going?” These may be taken as mere inquiries into one’s location in the world of men, but may as well be understood as triggers for the search for one’s true nature, and one’s destiny. The marvelous versatility of both our words and our mind furthermore allows us to embrace both sides, and to bring them together with our speech, letting the world reflect the earth, and the earth reflect the world. The most mundane action may then become the source of an experience of appropriation of one’s

fundamental nature. The world may become a passage guiding man toward the truth of the earth, the realm where everything is tangible and real, and yet where there is not a single "thing" existing as such, as a "thing" belongs to man's world, bits cut out from the seamless totality of the earth and the sky.

One who has passed through the gate discovered within man's world and experienced the seamlessness of the earth then should feel compelled to share this life-changing encounter with his fellow dwellers of the world, who have yet to share his vision of this truth. Talking with them about the affairs of the world, he subtly guides fellow dwellers to this gate, causing them to realize that they often speak of different things. The misalignment between their words is then made more and more obvious, impossible to ignore. Counting things of the world, playing the game of possessing and appropriating these things, the man of the world is forced to be confronted with the arbitrariness of the rules of this game and of the very nature of these things by the master of earth and world, the one who is at home in both realms, and in neither, always leaping between them, always on the move to avoid being blinded by familiarity. The things that he trades, acquires, or creates, they indeed exist as pieces of the earth, but the line delimiting these things is a pure invention of his perception and his mind. The grain of rice in his hand is only a "grain" in his world, and when he picks it up, it is the entire earth that he seizes. On the bare earth, there is no grain, no sack, no harvest, only the whole earth and sky, as a single thing, which is itself no-thing. Taking his staff and drawing a line upon the earth, the master of earth and world can then show the arbitrariness of all the lines drawn inside the world, exposing their illusory nature. A special event may then occur: the alignment between what is said by the master and what is understood by the man of the world, a realization of the nature of the earth, finally revealed to him. The deceitful nature of the world being exposed may then be acknowledged by embracing the language of the earth, the signs standing in equilibrium between the two realms, with him shouting with all his might, producing a roar that means nothing and everything, a blank seal that marks the mind of those hearing it, without this trace being a clear image, only a signal, like the blow of a staff upon one's forehead —a sign of disapproval paired with an acknowledgment of progress, embracing the ambiguity that incarnates the true nature of the relationship between earth and world, and the true nature of man. If one thinks he has understood, he deserves a blow to punish him. If one thinks that he does not understand, he deserves a blow to reward him. When the staff has cleared any conception of any intention or meaning, then the ultimate blow will cause his death, the annihilation of his self, and then he will return to the earth, one with the grains of rice buried in the soil, which shall soon feed the children of the next summer.

Case 187 —Zhaozhou's Go Wash the Bowl —趙州洗鉢

Source: The Gateless Barrier Case 7.

A less complete version can be found in the Book of Serenity, case 39.[153]

【中】

zhào zhōu yīn sēng wèn mǒu jiǎ zhà rù cóng lín qǐ shī zhǐ shì
趙州因僧問：「某甲乍[1]入叢林[2]，乞師指示。」
zhōu yún chī zhōu liǎo yě wèi sēng yún chī zhōu liǎo yě
州云：「喫粥了也未。」僧云：「喫粥了也。」
zhōu yún xǐ bō yú qù qí sēng yǒu xǐng
州云：「洗鉢盂去。」其僧有省。

[1] 【乍】[zhà]: "just [now]" / "suddenly" / "abruptly."

[2] 【叢林】S:【丛林】[cóng lín]: "the forest" / "the jungle." In a Zen context, it designates the community of practitioners, monks, and monasteries, with the trees being the pillars of the community, and the blades of grass the newcomers or the deluded, who have yet to grow.

【日】

こ じょうちな そうと それがし さにゅうそうりん
擧す。趙州因みに僧問う、「某甲、乍入叢林、
こ し しじ しゅうわ きっしゅく おわ いま
乞う師指示せよ。」州云く、「喫粥し了るや未だしや。」
そういわ きっしゃく おわ しゅうわ はつう
僧云く、「喫粥し了る。」州云く、「鉢盂を洗い去れ。」
あら さ そ そうせい あ
其の僧省有り。

【E】

A monk asked Zhaozhou: "This one has just entered the monastery.[1] Please, teacher, offer him some instruction!" Zhaozhou asked: "Has he eaten his rice gruel?" The monk replied: "He has eaten his gruel." Zhaozhou said, "Then he better go and wash the bowl." Thereupon, the monk gained some insight.

[1] "The monastery": Literally, "the forest." See note 2 of the Chinese text.

[153] The Book of Serenity, case 39: 「舉。僧問趙州。學人乍入叢林乞。師指示州云。喫粥了也未僧云。喫了州云。洗鉢盂去。」

When a man feels the vacuity of the world seeping into the innermost part of his self is when the first step be taken. He is struck by the absence of meaning of this gigantic assembly of things and signs, dazzled by the absence of questioning of his brethren, who live a existence whose sole purpose is the flattering of the self, the pursuit of pleasure or power. He identifies the sickness afflicting him, the locus of the disease infecting his mind: it is his home, his world, this place into which he was thrown at birth and through which he experiences all that is within the reach of his senses. It now appears so vain, so empty, that he becomes desperate to fill this void in his heart, and so he decides to depart from his home, to travel the land in search of wisdom and guidance, to unveil the meaning of his existence, to quench his thirst for significance. He thus seeks the company of men who also severed themselves from their homes, from their families, from the affairs of the world, so that they would support each other on the path they set themselves to walk upon.

With an earnest but cluttered mind, the novice therefore begs for instruction when he finally encounters someone who seems to embody the meaningful life that he seeks. He expects to hear life-changing words of wisdom that will enthrall his heart and reveal a new world to him, such as by reading secret knowledge stealthily passed on through the ages, too precious to be shared with the world as a whole, considering himself now worthy of partaking in this hidden treasure. The answer he receives is nonetheless more puzzling than anything he prepared himself for, and it comes in the form of a question: "Have you eaten your meal?" After an instinctive nod, then comes the instruction, the first milestone on the path: "Then, go wash your bowl." The newcomer hoped to be the recipient of some arcane wisdom, a jewel of the world, chiseled in language, carved into words, immaterial things and thoughts that would only be imagined in his mind, but accurately perceiving the great experience of the man in front of him, without doubting, for a single instant, of his familiarity with the truth he seeks, he realizes what is pointed out to him. What he needs, the path he walks, does not lead one away from the earth and to the heights of the world. On the contrary, it brings down the learned, the men of the heights, making him once again experience the bare earth with the eyes of an infant, letting him be soaked by an experience of the most common things, such as the satisfaction of the most fundamental instinct and need of the living: feeding. Such an essential activity is still far from purely earthly. It represents a subtle blend of earth and world, with the substance of the earth being associated with the use of things of the world. The food, made of earth that was transformed by life, is prepared according to the culture of his people, his world handed over by his ancestors, and it is eaten using vessels and utensils combining earthly substance with worldly use. In the daily

activities of all the men of the world therefore lies the truth of being itself, the subtle wisdom that can only be perceived through a direct experience. It is felt when one is without thought, without hesitation or desire, in the accomplishment of one's daily duties, performed naturally. He then lets his limbs be guided by the course of the entirety of the heavens and the earth around him, and finally gains some insight, seeing that the vacuity of the world that perplexed him and incited him to undertake his initiatic journey is now contrasted with the blissful void of his heart, as he has let go of all things. The meaning he sought now itself appears vain, as he knows that the truth cannot be experienced where meaning can be found. The bowl that he washes represents all that he needs to know. He can see his true face in it, and as an inconspicuous smile is perceived upon his face, he now sees the way, everywhere he looks.

Case 188 —Dongshan's Three Beatings — 洞山三頓

Source: The Gateless Barrier Case 15.

【中】

yún mén yīn dòng shān cān cì mén wèn yuē jìn lí shén chù
雲門 因 洞山 参次， 門 問曰：「近離甚處。」
shān yún chá dù mén yuē xiàng zài shén chù shān yún hú
山 云：「査渡。」 門 曰：「夏在甚處。」 山 云：「湖
nán bào cí mén yuē jī shí lí bī shān yún bā yuè
南報慈。」 門 曰：「幾時離彼。」 山 云：「八月
èr shí wǔ mén yuē fàng rǔ sān dùn bàng shān zhì míng rì què
二十五。」 門 曰：「放汝三頓棒。」 山 至明日却
shàng wèn xùn zuó rì méng hé shàng fàng sān dùn bàng bù zhī guò zài shén me
上問訊：「昨日蒙[1] 和尚放三頓棒，不知過在甚麼
chù mén yuē fàn dài zi jiāng xī hú nán biàn rèn me qù shān
處。」 門 曰：「飯袋子，江西湖南，便恁麼去山[2]
yú cī dò wù
。」於此大悟。

[1] 【蒙】 [méng]: "to receive [a favor]."

[2] 【去山】 [qù shān]: Literally "to go to a mountain." Here, the mountain designates monasteries.

【日】

こ うんもん ちな とうざん さん つい もん と
擧す。雲門、因みに洞山の参ずる次で、門、問う

いわ　きんりいず　ところ　さんいわ　さと　もん
て曰く、「近離甚れの處ぞ。」山云く、「査渡。」門
いわ　げいず　ところ　あ　さんいわ　こなん
曰く、「夏、甚れの處にか在る。」山云く、「湖南の
ほうじ　もんいわ　いくとき　かしこ　はな　さんいわ　はちがつ
報慈。」門曰く、「幾時か彼を離る。」山云く、「八月
にじゅうご　もんいわ　なんじ　さんとん　ぼう　ゆる　さん
二十五。」門曰く、「汝に三頓の棒を放す。」山、
みょうにち　いた　かえ　のぼ　もんじん　さくじつ　おしょう
明日に至って却って上って問訊す、「昨日、和尚の
さんとん　ぼう　ゆる　こうむ　し　とが　いずれ　ところ
三頓の棒を放すことを蒙る、知らず過甚麼の處に
あ　もんいわ　はんたい　す　こうせい　こなん　すなわ　いんも
か在る。」問曰く、「飯袋子、江西湖南、便ち恁麼に
さ　さん　ここ　おい　たいご
し去るか。」山、此に於て大悟す。

【E】

Dongshan went to pay Yunmen a visit. Yunmen asked him: “Where do you come from?” Dongshan said, “From [the village of] Chadu .” Yunmen asked: “Where did you spend the summer?” Dongshan replied: “The temple of Baoci, south of the lake.”[1] Yunmen asked: “When did you leave there?” Dongshan answered: “The twenty-fifth of the eighth moon.” Yunmen said, “This one will go without three beatings[2] with a stick [even though he deserves them].” The next day, Dongshan asked Yunmen: “Yesterday, the Master did a favor to this one by not giving him three beatings, but he does not know where he erred.” Yunmen said, “A mere rice bag, that’s what he is! Wandering around the country and going from one monastery to another.” At these words, Dongshan was greatly enlightened.

[1] “South of the lake,” that is, the Hunan province (湖南), which means “south of the lake.”

[2] “Beatings”: The original word 頓 [dùn] designates series of blows, and not blows themselves. The case thus mentions three “beatings” and not just three blows with a stick.

An experienced traveler may spend his entire life roaming the earth and yet fail to perceive its nature. He may have met innumerable

people, having extensively exchanged words with them, engaged in deep conversation, and yet still be blind to the nature of man. Covering much ground, he is condemned to stay in the shallows, and has no time to venture into the depths of the ground of being itself. Such a thing indeed takes ample time and demands that he let go of his dreams of exotic encounters, concealed knowledge, and god-like masters who would bestow upon him something sacred, something that would satiate the hunger seizing the core of his soul.

One who is familiar with the land will be able to name every village he passed through. He will remember the names of his hosts and be able to share countless stories of his lengthy peregrinations. Asked where he comes from, he will simply give what appears to be a factual answer, the name of the last station of his wandering, but as he faces someone who is more than a mere dweller of the world, someone who also sees clearly the essence of all that is, the truth of the earth behind the veil of the world of things, places, people, and names, he finally may receive some instruction, some guidance.

Sometimes, the one lost in the maze of the world can be brought to the earth with the tangible might of the earth, cutting out the futile discussions and debates with a swift blow of a wooden stick, with the pain felt in his flesh interrupting the train of his thought and bringing attention to the work of the senses, to his own body, and to the rest of the earth and the sky around him. The threat of the stick may nonetheless sometimes be as effective as the blows themselves, if one's mind is sufficiently eager to seek the reason behind this threat; if one is sufficiently active in the world of thought to unveil the nature of his own erring. Unceasingly thinking, roaming the labyrinth of reasons and concepts haphazardly heaped in his mind, he may perchance discover the nature of his wandering, see that he has merely touched the surface of the earth, but has yet to penetrate it, has yet to plunge his flesh in its dark, cold body, forgetting himself in it, becoming one with it. He will then realize that he is a mere bag of food, consuming the life of other beings so that he would remain above the face of the earth, whereas he should rather try to discover what lies under it, letting the earthly bag he himself forms be cut open and its content thrown into the obscure chasm, leaving no trace behind.

Once one has been acquainted with the truth of the earth, he may remain still or walk the roads until his knees are worn out. It will make no difference to him, as he will have realized that he is the earth itself, but he will then pass on the torch that he has received, offering its flame to all those he encounters, accompanied by blows of his walking staff, given to all, the worthy and the undeserving, with the brightest seeing

the path clearly at the instant the staff is raised.[154]

[154]See Wumen's commentary on this case: "The three beatings of Dongshan, where they deserved or not? If one says that they were deserved, then the blades of grass, the trees, and the entire forest should be beaten with a stick. If one says that they were not deserved, then Yunmen was telling a lie. If the one to whom one is speaking understands this, he and Dongshan breathe through the same mouth." Chinese original: 「洞山三頓棒合喫不合喫。若道合喫。草木叢林皆合喫棒。若道不合喫。雲門又成誑語。向者裏明得。方與洞山出一口氣。」, From: 《禪宗無門關》。 CBETA (Case 15).

Part V

The Return of the Winter of No-thing-ness

When the planet has completed its revolution around the luminous orb and the fallen leaves are buried in fresh snow, the myriads of things of the world are once again veiled in a cloak of uniformity, their contours disappearing, letting the oneness of nature once again be revealed through this remarkable gift of winter.

The end joins the beginning, and man realizes that both are illusions of his mind. There are no seasons, no years, and no things, only a sublime totality, an unfathomable whirlwind encompassing the entirety of the heavens, continuously in motion, and yet with nothing created or destroyed. Men yet grow and wither, even though the whole of life passes through time no matter what. The child grows into an adult, and then, when the winter of his life comes, his skin and bones worn out, he lets himself be devoured by the dark body of the earth. The fool receives the instruction of the wise, and his mind blooms like a flower before all his efforts are brought to naught as his body ineluctably crumbles under the weight of the passing years. The one whose eyes are truly open, all the same, rejoices in this fateful end, knowing it to be a mere prelude to a glorious rebirth that will soon come. Plunging himself into no-thing-ness with a bright smile on his face, he is now familiar with its truth, and he feels no attachment whatsoever to this place where there is no heat or cold, no life or death, no fool or wise. For he has now become aware of the nature of all things. He has learned the lessons of the guides he encountered on the way that brought him here, and he now knows that no-thing-ness is not a place that is to be reached or attained, but that it is merely the truth of being itself, the ground and the essence of all the things forming his world. He therefore feels no need to flee the crowded and filthy streets of the great citadel and is not compelled to seek refuge in the great desert beyond its walls, as he now sees the emptiness that reigns within it, the void that supports all these things. Everywhere, at any time, he is at home, without abiding there for a single instant. He is now like the heavens themselves, perfectly constant but perpetually in motion.

The instinct of the man keeping no-thing-ness before his eyes at all times then guides his footsteps as he roams among the throng of men utterly blind to it. The wondrous gift he has received from others who were offered this realization before him, he will now bestow upon them. Without a thing on his mind, without a trace of worry in his heart, he begins to point out the glorious teaching of the winter, bringing attention to the immaculate carpet of snow covering all things, revealing that there is only no-thing. With his tongue, his hands, and his entire flesh, he brings attention to the vacuity of distinctions, to the falsehood of discernment, products of the mind rather than objective truth. He invites men to throw themselves into the abyss, like men dying of thirst plunging into fresh waters, so that their anguish would vanish, as their

needs are fulfilled. Then, they will themselves be reborn out of these waters, seeing the earth and the sky in a new light, perceiving the life in the desolate landscape of winter, seeing the beauty of their vacuous world, with everything in its place, and no-thing reigning everywhere.

Case 189 —Qianfeng's One Road —乾峯一路

Source: The Gateless Barrier Case 48.

The version in Book of Serenity, case 61, contains one additional sentence: 「會麼會麼。」"Do you understand? Do you understand?"

【中】

qián fēng hé shàng yīn sēng wèn shí fāng bó qié fàn yí lù
乾峯 和尚因僧問：「十方[1] 薄伽梵[2] ，一路
niè pán mén wèi shěn lù tóu zài shén me chù fēng niān qī zhǔ zhàng huà
涅槃門，未審路頭在甚麼處。」峯 拈起拄杖，劃
yí huà yún zài zhě lǐ hòu sēng qīng yì yún mén mén niān qī shàn
一劃云：「在者裏。」後僧請益 雲門， 門 拈起扇
zi yún shàn zi bó tiào shàng sān shí sān tiān zhù zhuó dì shì
子云：「扇子跨跳[3] ，上三十三天，築[4] 著 帝釋[5]
bí kǒng dōng hǎi lǐ yú dǎ yí bàng yǔ sì pén qīng
鼻孔。東海鯉魚[6] 打一棒，雨似盆傾[7] 。」

[1] 【十方】 [shí fāng]: "the ten directions." In a Buddhist context, it designates the four cardinal directions (north, south, east, and west), the four ordinal directions (northeast, southeast, southwest, and northwest), and the zenith and nadir. It often symbolizes the whole of the universe.

[2] 【薄伽梵】 [bó qié fàn]: From the Sanskrit "bhagavān" (भगवान्), meaning "fortunate," which by extension came to signify "lord." Here, it designates Śākyamuni Buddha.

[3] 【跨跳】 [bó tiào]: "to jump."

[4] 【築】 S:【筑】 [zhù]: "to ram"/ "to hit." Pronounced [zhú] in Taiwan.

[5] 【帝釋天】 S:【帝释天】 [dì shì tiān]: Śakra (शक्र), the lord god of the Trāyastriṃśa Heaven, and a protector of Buddhism.

[6] 【東海鯉魚】 [dōng hǎi lǐ yú]: "the Carp of the Eastern Sea." A traditional story of a carp that successfully jumps over a gate named the Dragon Gate, after several attempts and when many others had failed. It then soars to the heavens and is transformed into a dragon. This story encourages perseverance. The story can be found in "The Records of Sanqin"(三秦記・鯉魚跳龍門).

[7] 【傾】 S:【倾】 [qīng]: "to overturn" / "to pour out."

【日】

舉す。乾峰和尚、因みに僧問う、「十方薄伽梵、一路涅槃門。未審し路頭甚麼の處にか在る。」峰、拄杖を拈起して劃一劃して云く、「者裏に在り。」後に僧、雲門に請益す。門、扇子を拈起して云く、「扇子跨跳して三十三天に上り、帝釋の鼻孔を築著す。東海の鯉魚、打つこと一棒すれば、雨盆を傾くに似たり。」

【E】

A monk asked Qianfeng: "All the Buddhas in the ten directions,[1] they are on the one road to the doors of Nirvana. Does one know where this road begins?" Qianfeng picked up and raised his staff, drew a line[2] in the air with it, and said, "Here it is." Later, this monk asked Yunmen for some guidance [to understand this matter]. Yunmen took up a fan and said, "This fan will jump up to the thirty-third heaven and poke the nostrils of Shakra[3] [the lord of the heavens]. It is like the 'Carp of the Eastern Sea'[4] [that becomes a dragon soaring in the sky and] that, with its tail, tips over [the clouds like a bowl, causing] rain to spill [over the earth]."

[1] "The ten directions": See note 1 of the Chinese text.

[2] "A line," that is, also the Chinese character for the number "one" (一).

[3] "Shakra": See note 5 of the Chinese text.

[4] "The Carp of the Eastern Sea": See note 6 of the Chinese text.

Strenuously and obstinately, as empires rose and fell across the planet, men carved the face of the earth with stones and steel, plows and picks, machines and explosives, to appropriate the dry land and create channels through which people and goods would flow without impediment, crossing swamps and rivers, passing through mountains and over gorges, painting the country with vast arrays of intersecting lines

linking cities and villages, becoming the overflowing veins and arteries allowing civilization to endure and prosper. These are tools of the world of man, utterly useless to the other branches of the tree of life. The birds navigate freely in the air, knowing no earthly boundaries, and the tiger runs through the forest according to its instinct, only avoiding the solid obstacles standing in its way. Because he is so used to following these arteries of his world, man sees the course of his own life and the path he is destined to take as resembling such roads covering the earth. He expects to be given a detailed map or precise directions by the elder offering him instruction, a clear destination, with milestones to reach on the way there. Where will he find the truth of his own being? Where will he contemplate his true face?

The true frame of the trees appears only when all their leaves have fallen to the ground, when the icy winds sweep the earth and the world's activity is considerably reduced, with men retreating inside their cozy homes. Likewise, the truth of one's being can only appear once man lets the ten thousand things encumbering his mind fall into the abyss, the place where not a single thing can be perceived, while his hands may remain full. Using things without seeing them as things, the guide can raise his staff and trace a line in the sky, saying: "This is the gate! This is the road! It is right in front of you, and always was! Just open up your eyes." Yet the slumbering man of the world is so accustomed to the sweetness of the land of dreams that he may be incapable of finding the strength to open his eyes.

The dreamer, the prisoner of the illusions of the world, firmly believes in the solidity of its foundations, and thus does not believe he can disrupt its order, or even refuse to be subject to it. What he does not see is that this order is the dream he is dreaming, and that simply by opening up his eyes, its spell would be instantaneously broken, revealing the illusory nature of all that he previously saw and held dear. The landscape in front of him would not change, but he would see no-thing, only the unmediated truth of being, which is no-thing-ness itself. Given such a realization, he may return to the world to show others his vision, now being a master of the world, someone who can do anything, who handles the greatest matters as a child plays with toys, as he perceives their illusory nature, and he knows that illusions are the most easily controlled and transformed. The fan in his hand may then jump to the highest heaven and poke the nostrils of the heavenly lord. He may turn the carp swimming in his pond into the most fearful dragon soaring in the sky, tipping over the clouds and causing abundant rain to flood the fields down below. Once one has seen his own true face, nothing is impossible, and all possible things are merely no-thing. The path then becomes a chasm, but one no longer worries, as he is already where he is supposed to be.

Case 190 —What Does Not Picking and Choosing Mean —如何是不揀擇

Source: The Blue Cliff Record Case 57.

【中】

jǔ sēng wèn zhào zhōu zhì dào wú nán wéi xián jiǎn zé rú
舉。僧問趙州：「『至道無難，唯嫌揀擇。』[1] 如
hé shì bù jiǎn zé zhōu yún tiān shàng tiān xià wéi wǒ dú zūn
何是不揀擇。」州云：「天上天下，唯我獨尊。」[2]
sēng yún cī yóu shì jiǎn zé zhōu yún tián shè nú shén me
僧云：「此猶是揀擇。」州云：「田厙奴[3]，什麼
chù shì jiǎn zé sēng wú yǔ
處是揀擇。」僧無語。

[1]【至道無難，唯嫌揀擇】[zhì dào wú nán, wéi xián jiǎn zé]: "the supreme Way is not difficult; it simply dislikes picking and choosing." The opening verse of the poem "Faith in Mind," 信心銘 [xìn xīn míng], attributed to the third patriarch of Zen, Sengcan (鑑智僧璨 [Jiàn zhì Sēng càn]). The poem continues as follows: 「至道無難，唯嫌揀擇。但莫憎愛，洞然明白。毫釐有差，天地懸隔。」 "The supreme Way is not difficult; it simply dislikes picking and choosing. Neither love nor hate, and you will clearly understand. Be off by a hair, and there is a gap as wide as the one separating heaven from earth."

[2]【天上天下，唯我獨尊】[tiān shàng tiān xià, wéi wǒ dú zūn]: "above and below the heavens, I alone am honored." A sentence that Gautama Buddha proclaimed just after his birth, according to the Buddhist tradition. This quote appears in the "Dīrgha Āgama," 長阿含經 in Chinese.

[3]【田厙奴】[tián shè nú]: Literally, "a slave in a rural village," here meaning "a yokel."

【日】

こ そう じょうしゅう と し どう かた な
擧す。僧、趙州に問う、「至道は難きこと無し、
た けんじゃく きら いか こ ふけんじゃく しゅう
唯だ揀擇を嫌うと。如何なるか是れ不揀擇。」州
いわ てんじょうてんが ゆい が どくそん そういわ こ
云く、「天上天下、唯我獨尊。」僧云く、「此れは
な こ けんじゃく しゅういわ でんしゃぬ いず こ こ
猶お是れ揀擇。」州云く、「田厙奴、什麼處か是れ
けんじゃく そう ご な
揀擇。」僧、語無し。

【E】

A monk asked Zhaozhou: "'The supreme Way is not difficult; it simply dislikes picking and choosing.'[1] What does 'not picking and choosing' mean?" Zhaozhou said, "Above the

heavens and under the heavens, I am the only one, alone and honored."[2] The monk said, "That is still picking and choosing." Zhaozhou said, "Stupid yokel! Where is the picking and choosing?" The monk remained silent.

[1] "The supreme Way is not difficult; it simply dislikes picking and choosing": See note 1 of the Chinese text.

[2] "Above the heavens and under the heavens, I am the only one, alone and honored": See note 2 of the Chinese text.

The skies encompass all that is: the world, life, and the earth that supports them. They are the vessel of being, the foundation of every single thing, but they themselves are carried upon a precise course. They are like a marble running down a track, and this track is the way of the sky, the course of nature, the destiny of being itself. To perceive it is the easiest and the hardest. It simply demands that one refrain from picking and choosing. What may appear to be a trivial behavior may, despite this fact, represent the foundation of man's world. This world begins to take shape the moment his mind decides to divide the flow of one's perception into different things. The sun is set apart from the rest of the heavens due to the contrast it offers and to the sharpness of its contour. The prey running through the grasses is likewise distinguished from the rest of the earth, so that it may be caught and prolong one's existence by being ingested. By picking elements from the whole of the heavens and setting them aside, man therefore constructs his world, choosing where to draw the lines separating things, like a gigantic puzzle in which he spends his days and his nights.

To refrain from picking and choosing, so as to perceive the way of the sky, thus represents a distancing from the world, a repudiation of one of man's most ancient and entrenched instincts. It is to let all things drift away from us once we have released the grip we had upon them, until there is but one thing left, ourselves. One may then utter seemingly preposterous words, that yet exhibit the dissolution of the self into the whole of being: "Above the heavens and under the heavens, I am the only one, alone and honored!" When there is only one thing, this thing becomes more than a mere thing, it becomes everything. It is the utmost manifestation of being itself, what surpasses the heavens and the earth, the result of the collapse of the world onto the ground of being, unveiling what is not a thing, what carries the heavens themselves: the way of the sky.

Appearances may yet be deceiving. The snowy white plains under the sky filled with fleecy clouds may hide a profusion of things, while a

torrent of words and an explosion of signs may have the emptiest of minds as their source, one that is entirely devoid of any trace of picking and choosing. The tongue and the lips may be guided by the way itself, in an instinctual response to an encounter with someone in need of guidance. These words depart from his mouth without having been the object of a reflection, and without leaving any imprint upon his mind, being released into the air, and conversely, one may stay as silent as a grave and have a mind bustling with thoughts and ideas, picking and choosing, holding on to words as if they were treasure, not realizing that they become a poison veiling his eyes to the way of the sky.

Case 191 —The Pitfall of the People of Our Time —時人窠窟

Source: The Blue Cliff Record Case 58.

【中】

jǔ sēng wèn zhào zhōu zhì dào wú nán wéi xián jiǎn zé shì
舉。僧問 趙州：「『至道無難，唯嫌揀擇。』[1] 是
shí rén kē kū fǒu zhōu yún céng yǒu rén wèn wǒ zhí dé wǔ
時人窠窟[2] 否。」 州 云：「曾有人問我，直得[3] 五
nián fēn shū bú xià
年分疎[4] 不下。」

[1] 【至道無難，唯嫌揀擇】[zhì dào wú nán, wéi xián jiǎn zé]: “the supreme Way is not difficult; it simply dislikes picking and choosing.” The opening verse of the poem “Faith in Mind,” 信心銘 [xìn xīn míng], attributed to the third patriarch of Zen, Sengcan (鑑智僧璨 [Jiàn zhì Sēng càn]). The poem continues as follows: 「至道無難，唯嫌揀擇。但莫憎愛，洞然明白。毫釐有差，天地懸隔。」 “The supreme Way is not difficult; it simply dislikes picking and choosing. Neither love nor hate, and you will clearly understand. Be off by a hair, and there is a gap as wide as the one separating heaven from earth.”

[2] 【窠窟】 [kē kū]: “a pitfall.”

[3] 【直得】 [zhí dé]: “after [this duration].”

[4] 【疎】 [shū]: variant of 疏 [shū]: “to clear away obstruction.”

【日】

こ そう じょうじゅう と しどう かた な
舉す。僧、趙州に問う、「至道は難きこと無し、
た けんじゃく きら こ じじん かつう しゅう
唯だ揀擇を嫌うと。是れ時人の窠窟なりや。」州
いわ かつ ひと わが と あ つい ごねんとき
云く、「曾て人の我に問う有り、直得に五年分
あかしきれざる
疎不下なり。」

【E】

A monk asked Zhaozhou: "'The supreme Way is not difficult; it simply dislikes picking and choosing.'[1] Isn't that the pitfall of the people of our time?" Zhaozhou said, "Once, someone asked me that, but even after five years, I still can't discern it clearly."

[1] "The supreme Way is not difficult; it simply dislikes picking and choosing": See note 1 of the Chinese text.

The selfless helper guiding men to the supreme way must often face the ingratitude of those who do not understand his actions. When this guide talks about no-thing-ness and the illusory nature of the world within this same world, using language and other things belonging to it, they see such behavior as full of contradictions and are prompt to accuse their benefactor of falling prey to its illusions. It is in the nature of the men of the world to play its games, constantly attempting to humble others and to exalt themselves, with the aim of climbing the hierarchy of men, to enjoy prestige and be recognized as wise, powerful, or excellent. The man of the way nonetheless does not play these immature games. He does not let his heart be disturbed by the constant agitation of the world and the insatiable ambitions of its inhabitants. He simply acts according to his true nature, having let his own self fall down to the ground, offering his hand to those in need, without paying attention to their insults, but rather taking them where they are meant to go, sometimes gently, sometimes vigorously.

To guide those bogged down in the mire of the world, the guide must therefore muddy his robe, letting himself appear soiled by it, but this appearance is deceiving, as the one who has abandoned his self, thrown out his robe upon the earth, is not there anymore, as such, and thus there is no place where the mud would stick, no person who would be soiled by wading through the mire. When one's mind is clear of all thoughts, no contradiction remains. Words and ideas flow naturally, in and out, emerging and disappearing, without anyone there to be attached to them. He may pick a sentence among thousands to lead those hearing it to abandon any notion of picking and choosing, repeating it hundreds of times, and yet never let it dwell in his heart, rather embodying it with all his being. Attachment to non-attachment is itself a form of attachment, and perhaps the most dangerous and the most difficult to free oneself from. The best remedy for such woe may be to feign embracing a thing of the world, to appear to pick and choose a series of words that best

represent the way to go, the path leading out of the mire of the world, the place where one would not be attached to anything, including attachment itself, as there, there would be nothing to be attached to. Such a place is nonetheless not one that is to be found in the world or even upon the earth. It is rather one's true nature, which is what is left when all the clutter of the world, all the things found upon the earth and in the heavens have been let go of. One may then have his hands firmly holding on to things of the earth and one's mouth constantly repeating ideas and words of the world, and yet remain blind to their nature as things, using them without thinking about them, the mind then becoming a valley through which a river emerges and flows when the celestial storehouses pour out rain upon the land.

When the guide is questioned concerning the apparent contradiction between his words calling to refrain from picking and choosing and his actions that appear to do such a thing, he does not feel the poke. He does not hear any attempt at overcoming him, but rather shamelessly pours out the content of his heart for all to see, and what they behold is no-thing. The lost ones see themselves surrounded by pitfalls, and by oppositions between the past and the future, what is picked and what is left behind, but the guide earnestly declares that he is blind to these things. He cannot discern truth from falsehood, the coherent from the contradictory, as his mind is like a frozen sea under a clear winter sky, with light and wind freely occupying it, passing and going, without anything standing out, without him discerning anything. Being so, the world then fades away, and the earth can no longer be distinguished from the skies. This is when one becomes one with them, embodying the way, with no-thing else left.

Case 192 —As Soon as One Uses Language —才有語言

Source: The Blue Cliff Record Case 59.

【中】

jǔ sēng wèn zhào zhōu zhì dào wú nán wéi xián jiǎn zé cái
舉。僧問趙州：「『至道無難，唯嫌揀擇。』[1] 纔
yǒu yǔ yán shì jiǎn zé hé shàng rú hé wèi rén zhōu yún hé bù yīn
有語言是揀擇，和尚如何為人。」州云：「何不引
jìn zhè yǔ sēng yún mǒu jiǎ zhǐ niàn dào zhè lǐ zhōu yún zhǐ
盡這語。」僧云：「某甲只念到這裏。」州云：「只
zhè zhì dào wú nán wéi xián jiǎn zé
這『至道無難，唯嫌揀擇』。」

[1]【至道無難，唯嫌揀擇】[zhì dào wú nán, wéi xián jiǎn zé]: “the supreme Way is not difficult; it simply dislikes picking and choosing.” The opening verse of the poem “Faith in Mind,” 信心銘 [xìn xīn míng], attributed to the third patriarch of Zen, Sengcan (鑑智僧璨 [Jiàn zhì Sēng càn]). The poem continues as follows: 「至道無難，唯嫌揀擇。但莫憎愛，洞然明白。毫釐有差，天地懸隔。」 “The supreme Way is not difficult; it simply dislikes picking and choosing. Neither love nor hate, and you will clearly understand. Be off by a hair, and there is a gap as wide as the one separating heaven from earth.”

【日】

舉す。僧、趙州に問う、「至道は難きこと無し、唯だ揀擇を嫌う。纔に語言有るや、是れ揀擇なりと。和尚は如何に人に爲うるや。」州云く、「什麼ぞ這の語を引き盡さざる。」僧云く、「某甲は只だ這裏に念じ到るのみ。」州云く、「只だ這れぞ至道は難きこと無し、唯だ揀擇を嫌う。」

【E】

A monk asked Zhaozhou: “‘The supreme way is not difficult, it simply dislikes picking and choosing.’[1] But as soon as one uses language, it is already an action of ‘picking and choosing.’ Then how can the Master [do something] for other people?” Zhaozhou said, “Why don’t you quote the sentence to the end?” The monk said, “This one just had this much in mind.” Zhaozhou said, “It is just: ‘The supreme way is not difficult, it simply dislikes picking and choosing.’”

[1] “The supreme Way is not difficult; it simply dislikes picking and choosing”: See note 1 of the Chinese text.

Once one’s destination has been reached, the walking staff that supported the body of the traveler and helped him probe the solidity of the ground in front of him can and should be thrown away, or at least handed over to someone who still has need of it. Such is the work of the tongue and the fruit of thought. Language is what supports the world of man, for better or worse, placing him in a unique position among living things, allowing him to distance himself from the bare reality of the earth

and the sky, retreating in abstraction and observing the tangible realm as an object, but also often concealing the truth of the earth and the sky, and leading him to believe that his own creations, the things of his world like words, concepts, and tales, represent the unmediated truth of all that is, as he deludes himself into thinking he is a master of the heavens, since he holds sway over the words he uses.

The use of one's tongue therefore does not preclude a deep familiarity with what lies beyond the frontiers of man's world, the limits of language. One may be a man of peace and nonetheless be skilled in the art of war, in the use of the sharpest sword. The blows of his sword do not cut out the seamless whole of the heavens so that its pieces would be more easily manipulated and observed by his eyes. They rather clear away the world of all its things. They scatter the pieces that are the result of the shattering of the whole of the earth by our forefathers and brethren, letting them be engulfed in the dark and cold depths, like glowing embers thrown into the cracks of a glacier, immediately extinguished and never to be seen again. When he wields the works of language crafted by another, he simply carries it through the world, showing it to its dwellers, pointing out the glimpse of truth that may be distinguished in it. He does not feel compelled to shatter this shard of the sky further but simply becomes its diligent guardian. He does not add a single word of his own making to it, and neither does he subtract any. He is a vessel of words, a storehouse of things, but one that is always widely open, letting these things be freely brought to him or taken away, leaving them intact, with not even a fingerprint left from him. This is how one can dwell in the world without cutting out the continuous totality of the skies, without picking and choosing, either embracing the whole or carrying the most beautiful and faithful pieces already found inside the world, those guiding men toward the place where all pieces have been mended, fused back together into the whole of the skies, before this whole itself collapses and shows itself to be no-thing.

One who has yet to open up his eyes to the nature of the pieces of the world nonetheless does not act in such a manner. He unrestrainedly investigates each piece that he receives, shattering them further into smaller chunks, dissecting them, talking about them, reflecting upon their nature and their substance, adding his contribution to them, gluing them together with other things, making what he considers to be something clearer, something more truthful. His mind is replete with such pieces, haphazardly accumulated, and the gift of the man of the way, the shard that represents the direction that leads outside of the world itself, is not appreciated or understood. The direction remains unnoticed, as he is too busy talking about the arrow to pay attention to where it points. Only when he hears that the supreme way is not difficult, that it simply dislikes picking and choosing, and decides not to hold on

to it, not to try to investigate it, but only lets himself be pervaded by its truth, without feeling compelled to add or subtract anything from it, can this sentence then shape his being, and show him the way of the sky.

Case 193 —It Is Not the Mind, Not Buddha, [and Not a Thing] —不是心佛

Source: The Gateless Barrier Case 27.

【中】

nán quán hé shàng yīn sēng wèn yún huán yǒu bù yǔ rén shuō di fǎ
南泉 和尚因僧問云：「還有不與人說底[1] 法
ma quán yún yǒu sēng yún rú hé shì bù yǔ rén shuō di
麼。」 泉 云：「有。」僧云：「如何是不與人說底
fǎ quán yún bú shì xīn bú shì fó bú shì wù
法。」 泉 云：「不是心，不是佛，不是物。」

[1] 【底】 [di]: Equivalent to the modern Chinese particle 的 .

【日】

こ なんせんおしょう ちな そうと いわ かえ
擧す。南泉和尚、因みに僧問うて云く、「還って
ひと ため と てい ほうあ せんいわ あ
人の與に說かざる底の法有りや。」泉云く、「有り。」
そういわ いか こ ひと ため と てい
僧云く、「如何なるか是れ人の與に說かざる底の
ほう せんいわ ふぜしん ふぜぶつ ふぜもつ
法。」泉云く、「不是心。不是佛。不是物。」

【E】

A monk asked Nanquan: “Is there still a teaching that no man has ever taught before?” Nanquan said, “There is.” The monk asked: “What is the teaching that no man has ever taught before?” Nanquan replied: “It is not the mind. It is not Buddha. It is not a thing.”

The work of the teacher is to initiate his students to new things, new ideas, new behavior, so that he can share his inner world with them,

allowing the knowledge stored within his mind to become part of them, familiar to them, and useful to them. Man receives his unique body from his parents, the result of the mingling of their essence, patiently interwoven as the result of a formidable process that emerged through meticulous selection across the ages, since the tree of life itself was nothing but a seed. His parents and neighbors, even so, possess another heritage, one that is not passed on through the flesh, but rather through years of teaching, introducing the newborn to their world, built with signs, words, images, and actions, rooted in their minds but extended upon the earth and all its inhabitants. The extensive learning undertaken by the young dwellers of the world slowly but ineluctably fills up their minds with innumerable things, which offer them knowledge of how to make sense of the continuous flow coming from their senses, helping them interpret their surroundings, offering a vision of themselves, the earth, life, the skies, and the world itself that was to a great extent shaped by the long chain formed by his ancestors. There for all that remains a teaching that no man has ever taught before.

Knowledge of the self can be passed on to the disciple, through guidance attuned to his experience, his embodiment. The mind of man is indeed no different from that of any other, and thus words can convey what was learned through contemplation, reflection, or meditation concerning the nature of the self. When it is seen clearly as a thing of the world, explained in detail with the most precise and vivid words of one's language, then the last teaching can be passed on, the one leading the student to cease to be attached to his own self, letting it drift away like a piece of wood snatched by the tide. Then, the essence of nature itself can appear and be taught.

Once the self is perceived and released, what is left is what is not the self, what it faced before its release, the environment around it, that is, the all-encompassing heavens and the earth within them. In the heavens, man tends to search for the answers to his most essential questions, seeing in them gods and spirits, men having transcended the boundaries of their own kind and liberated themselves from the yoke of the world and the chains of the earth, having become ethereal beings, having left their flesh behind them. The fantasy is thus mingled with the experience of the sky, and taught to the inhabitants of the world. But this coexistence, far from being an impediment, on the contrary, represents a strength of this teaching, an instance of marriage of truth and falsehood, imagination and direct experience, and it offers a way not to let oneself be ensnared by both. When the teaching of truth comes together with illusions, this renders the student more eager to release the grip he has upon the heavens as a whole, as he realizes that holding on to the truth may be more harmful than being surrounded by falsehood. Once the things of the sky interlaced with the fantasies of the world are

understood for what they are, they can then be thrown away, letting the world crumble, and the sky fall upon its ruins.

What then remains is the earth itself, the tangible things that are experienced directly by the senses. The teacher only needs to point them out or bring them to his students for them to be discovered. His wise words, fruit of the work of generations of learned men, allow them to know everything about them, their essence, their use, or their origin. Once the flow of the senses has passed through the sieve of reason, has been dissected to reveal its most fundamental elements, the teacher can then show that being does not depend upon this work of the senses. Reducing to naught this flow of the senses, plunging the students in the deepest sensory deprivation, by severing them from any contact with the earth, he reaches the end of what he can teach, and the beginning of the path they must tread without him. Once the self has been left behind; once the world and the skies have been cast away and one has severed himself from the earth itself, no-thing remains, and yet it is in this no-thing-ness that the ground of one's existence may finally appear, revealed and not taught, felt rather than discussed, the absolute clearing that has never been put into words, never been brought into the world of man.

Case 194 —Neither Mind nor Buddha —非心非佛

Source: The Gateless Barrier Case 33.

【中】

mǎ zǔ yīn sēng wèn rú hé shì fó zǔ yuē fēi xīn fēi fó
馬祖因僧問：「如何是佛。」祖曰：「非心非佛。」

【日】

こ ば そ ちな そう と いか こ ほとけ そ いわ ひしんひぶつ
擧す。馬祖、因みに僧問う、「如何なるか是れ佛。」祖曰く、「非心非佛。」

【E】

A monk asked Mazu: "What is Buddha?" Mazu said, "Neither 'mind' nor 'Buddha.'"

Words are the building blocks of our world. Without them, we might perceive the things around us, but we would be almost entirely incapable of reflecting upon them, or of sharing our experiences and knowledge with other men. We would be mere thoughtless animals, living an existence ruled by our primal instincts, without consideration for the nature of our being, without the possibility of retreating into abstraction and seeing the earth and the sky from a distance, as we would be fully immersed in them. Handed over to us as the legacy of our fathers, these words are defined through their relationship with others, as they all form an intricate web covering most of the earth and the sky, but also can describe the fruit of one's imagination, things that do not exist outside of our minds. With this power, thus comes some danger, as the imaginary can find itself inextricably linked to the tangible, what can be experienced by the senses, rendering men incapable of discerning one from the other. The words and concepts crafted by men therefore have to be put to the test, passed in the fire of experience, to see if they truly reflect a piece of the earth or the sky, or are mere creations of the mind.

Even the most formidable words created by mankind will nonetheless always remain mere tools guiding the mind toward the truth of what these words represent. They are mere arrows pointing toward a target, and thus one should be careful not to lose oneself in contemplating these instruments, nor forget to observe what they indicate, their destination. In this respect, the most essential words and concepts are certainly also those for which the trial by the fire of experience is the trickiest, as these essential things are indeed those that pervade our being to its core, and thus are the hardest to perceive directly with the senses, as objects, as they are the essence of our own being. One's head cannot observe itself without seeing its own representation in a mirror, and likewise, the truth of being cannot be perceived as an object as long as one remains something that *is*. Words and concepts thus guide man this far, but there comes a point where the building blocks become mere stumbling blocks hindering his advance on the way. The very words of "self" and "truth of being" become things that obscure the path, a mist that conceals. This is when one can realize that the truth of being is not the "truth of being," that the truth differs from its designation, its representation in the mind of man. This implies that, at some point, one must let go of any notion of "truth of being," forgetting these pernicious words and releasing the entire web connecting them to the rest of the world of man, the multitude of words and things, like a fishing net thrown into the depths when one has taken the last meal of his life. Only then may this truth perhaps come to the one who has emptied his mind like a silver bowl, waiting for the essence

of the heavens to fall and fill it to the brim, like the most pristine snow, rendering the bowl indistinguishable from this heavenly gift.

Case 195 —Knowledge Is Not the Way — 智不是道

Source: The Gateless Barrier Case 34.

【中】

nán quán yún xīn bú shì fó zhì bú shì dào
南泉 云：「心不是佛，智不是道。」

【日】

こ なんせんいわ しん こ ほとけ ち
舉す。南泉云く、「心は是れ佛にあらず、智は
こ どう
是れ道にあらず。」

【E】

Nanquan said, “The mind is not Buddha. Knowledge is not the way.”

The various meanings of each word we use are inextricably tied to the context in which it is used. The same sentence may thus be true when uttered by one person, at one point in time, and be false when pronounced by another, in another situation. The words offered to us by men whose gaze pierces through the nature of words to see the essence of what they represent are thus intended to help us share this vision of unmediated truth rather than incarnate such a truth. For the newcomer on the path, the clearest guidance is given in terms of definitions of how things are: “It is like this!” “The mind is the essence of all being.” Once the words have seeped into one’s mind, been appropriated, and have become part of oneself, this is when the time comes for this newly established knowledge, this part of this world, to be shaken to its foundations, so as to show that while this first step invites him to further progress, he must now realize the limits of any representation, the inherent falsehood of words. This is when the man of the way takes away the support he previously offered, the verbal walking

staff that supported the legs of the student who had trouble advancing on his own. He thus negates what he previously stated: "The mind is not the essence of being," thereby inevitably causing the student to doubt what he knows, to doubt himself, and to doubt the nature of the way of the sky he attempts to unveil.

If one thinks he has understood, he strays, and the way is plunged further into darkness. The way of the sky is not the "essence of being." It is not akin to the "self," and no form of knowledge will adequately incarnate it. Once the gate has been seen, and once one has perceived the fact that it leads outside of the walls of things forming man's world, both the affirmation and the negation can be abandoned. The contradictions can be resolved through annihilation, the canceling out of the opposites, leaving in their stead only a single word, a single thing. Then, the last word that remains absorbs the entirety of the sky. Its utterance summons the whole of being to our mind, placing the earth itself in our hand, and this is when one can realize that when there is only one thing left, it becomes utterly superfluous, completely useless, as what is represented by it is what we are, what there is, here and now, the experience through which we go at this instant and forever.[155] The last thing can thus be discarded, thrown into oblivion, allowing us to embrace the way of the sky, without mediation, without signs, beholding its perfect clarity, indistinguishable from the most total obscurity, as all oppositions have been resolved, and the very notion of "meaning" has been dissolved.

Case 196 —Every Day Is a Good Day —日日是好日

Source: The Blue Cliff Record Case 6.

【中】

jǔ yún mén chuí yǔ yún shí wǔ rì yǐ qián bú wèn rǔ
舉。雲門垂語云：「十五日[1]已前，不問汝；
shí wǔ rì yǐ hòu dào jiāng yí jù lái zì dài yún rì rì shì hǎo rì
十五日已後，道將一句來。」自代云：「日日是好日。」

[155]See: Yamada, Kou'un, *Mumonkan (Gateless Gate)* [Unpublished manuscript]: "From the essential point of view, when we say 'Buddha', the whole universe is Buddha. Nothing remains outside of Buddha. When we say 'mind', the whole universe is mind. Nothing remains outside of it. It is the same with 'knowing' and 'Way.' From the Zen point of view, the words Buddha, mind, knowing, and Way are nothing other than Mu, the sound of one hand clapping, just sitting or counting breaths."

[1] 【十五日】 [shí wǔ rì]: The 15th day of the month, that is, the day of the full moon, according to the Chinese lunar calendar.

【日】

こ　うんもん すいご　いわ　じゅうごにち いぜん　なんじ
舉す。雲門垂語して云く、「十五日已前は汝に
と　じゅうごにち いご　いっく　い　も　きた　みずか
問わず、十五日已後、一句を道い將ち來れ。」自ら
かわ　いわ　にちにち こ　こうじつ
代って云く、「日日是れ好日。」

【E】

Yunmen, giving instruction, said, “This one does not ask you about before the fifteenth day;[1] Tell him a phrase about after the fifteenth day.” He answered himself on behalf of the monks and said, “Every day is a good day.”

[1] “Fifteenth day”: See note 1 of the Chinese text.

The celestial mechanism is continuously in motion, as life flourishes upon the earth, witnessing the day ineluctably fold into the night, the veiling of the moon and its reappearance, the succession of the seasons. This mechanism originally possessed no gears. Each wheel is, in its essence, perfectly smooth, and each transition completely seamless, but as man cannot fathom its magnificence in its entirety, he carved notches upon them with the chisel of reason to quantify their movement, to keep track of them, that is, to understand and appropriate them. Man thus counts the days, the months, and the years, pushing away the boundaries of his presence, as his world and his words allow him to keep traces of the past and to project himself in the future, using a timeline of his own making, having transformed the permanence of the present into a series of rigidly spaced notches etched on the path of the heavens.

The carving of the gears of time, however, only follows the great shattering of the unicity of the heavens into the myriad of things of the world of man. The fabric of the firmament is rent into innumerable strips. The sun is extracted out of the whole of the sky, and so is the moon, the earth, and every single thing found upon its rocky face. Once this great quantification was accomplished, new divisions were then produced by the calculating mind of man. All things began to be sorted into good or bad, sacred or common, precious or worthless. The path trodden

by the one whose life is devoted to the embracing of the way of the sky still takes him in the opposite direction to that taken by most men throughout their history. He was indeed born into the world of the myriad of things, but he knows that these things are not the way of the sky, are not the essence of the heavens themselves, and he therefore set himself on a journey backward, to behold what there was before the mind of his fathers chiseled countless notches on the celestial wheels, before they rent the fabric of the sky to create the things of their world. He therefore sews back the fabric of the sky, and fuses the things of the world so that they once again form a seamless whole, but he does so effortlessly, simply dropping all the things to which he was attached, the tools and the riches of the world, and he then sees the wheels once again become perfectly smooth, pristinely polished, and the firmament like a drape covering the entirety of all that is.

Once the past and the future are released and all that is left is pure presence, and once all the things of the world are let down to the ground together with all the arbitrary oppositions and subjective contrasts between them, then every single day is a good day, every single day is a sacred holiday, the most precious moment of one's existence, as there is simply no other. Then, he will cease to wonder what difference the unveiling of the full moon makes. He will forget the road home and be oblivious to the end of the summer. His mind will be draped by the fullness of the heavens, leaving no thing to be seen, and seeing no-thing. He is at home where he is, here and now, and the brethren with him are like images of himself in a mirror, with a good time shared with them at all times.

Case 197 —Complete Exposure of the Substance to the Golden Wind —體露金風

Source: The Blue Cliff Record Case 27.

【中】

jǔ sēng wèn yún mén shù diāo yè luò shí rú hé yún mén
舉。僧問雲門：「樹凋葉落時如何。」雲門
yún tǐ lù jīn fēng
云：「體[1] 露金風[2] 。」

[1] 【體】 S:【体】 [tǐ]: "body" / "substance."

[2] 【金風】 S:【金风】 [jīn fēng]: Literally "the golden wind," designating the autumn wind (秋風). In the Daoist tradition, each season is associated with an element: wood for the spring, fire for the summer, gold for the autumn, and water for the winter.

【日】

舉す。僧、雲門に問う、「樹凋み葉落つる時、如何。」雲門云く、「體露金風。」

【E】

A monk asked Yunmen: “What is it when the tree withers and the leaves fall?” Yunmen answered: “Complete exposure of the substance[1] to the golden wind.”[2]

[1] “The substance”: See note 1 of the Chinese text.

[2] “The golden wind”: See note 2 of the Chinese text.

Seldom do we let ourselves be exposed to the sky and to the eyes of men. We cover our skin with cloth, fur, or wool, firstly to protect ourselves from the unforgiving forces of the sky, the icy winds and the rain of winter that rob us of our precious warmth, threatening to irremediably extinguish the fire of life ardently burning within us. We also wrap ourselves in elegant garments to veil our nakedness from the eyes of men, being reluctant to let the appearance of our flesh be seen and judged, feeling safer with the protection and concealment of this soft armor we carry each day of our lives. Likewise, our true face is kept hidden behind a mask composed of ten thousand pieces, the things forming the world around us, which are like the shroud of leaves covering the branches of the trees, intercepting the radiance of the sun, blocking the winds blowing over the earth. Without this emerald canopy, the tree would not have grown to this height and reached this age. It would have remained a seed buried in the muddy ground, just as man would be no more than the plants covering the face of the earth if his world had never been elevated to its current height, thanks to the innumerable things he industriously created with his mind and hands. What is veiled is nonetheless sooner or later bound to be discovered. The mask cannot be kept upon one’s face forever, or else this face would never be seen. The tree must shed its leaves when the time comes, so that they may be renewed. The meaning of all things is revealed through contrast. The realization of the presence of something implies a period of absence, allowing its nature to be seen, and fortunately, the heavens themselves continuously work to perform such a pacing of the alternation between presence and absence, concealment and unveiling, death and rebirth.

When the fall comes, the emerald canopy of the forest turns into amber. The dry leaves, having taken the color of the sun whose light they

absorbed during the summer, now fall to the ground and become part of it as they are torn by feet, hoofs, and the torrential rains. The tree then finds itself exposed to the autumn wind, having shed its armor, having laid bare its nature for all eyes to see. When the icy winds of winter embrace it, it appears withered, without life, becoming one with the rest of the dead earth, subjugated by the heavenly forces, conquered by the flowing ether filling out the sky. When man lets go of the ten thousand things forming his world, this is when his nature is exposed, and when he becomes one with the earth and the sky. He lets go of his life and embraces the great death, and through this experience, he overcomes all fear and all desire, and enters no-thing-ness itself. This withering of life is nonetheless only temporary. This death is only transient, the prelude to a rebirth, a re-appropriation of the world, in which the reborn will proclaim the truth of his enlightenment, and incarnate death itself among the living, becoming a monument to no-thing-ness at the heart of the world of the ten thousand things, like the tree during the spring, when the gigantic solar wheel has completed its revolution.

Case 198 —Yunmen's Two Diseases —雲門兩病

Source: The Book of Serenity Case 11.

【中】

jǔ yún mén dà shī yún guāng bú tòu tuō yǒu liǎng bān bìng yí
舉。雲門 大師云：「光不透脫，有兩般病。一
qiè chù bù míng miàn qián yǒu wù shì yī tòu dé yí qiè fǎ kōng yīn yīn
切處不明，面前有物，是一。透得一切法空，隱隱
dì sì yǒu gè wù xiāng sì yì shì guāng bú tòu tuō yòu fǎ shēn yì yǒu liǎng
地似有箇物相似，亦是光不透脫。又法身[1] 亦有兩
bān bìng dé dào fǎ shēn wéi fǎ zhí bú wàng yī jiàn yóu cún duò zài fǎ
般病，得到法身，為法執不忘，已見猶存，墮在法
shēn biān shì yī zhí ráo tòu dé fàng guò jí bù kě zī xì diǎn jiǎn
身邊，是一。直饒[2] 透得，放過即不可，子細點檢
jiāng lái yǒu shén me qì xī yì shì bìng
將來，有甚麼氣息[3] ，亦是病。」

[1] 【法身】 [fǎ shēn]: "the Dharma body." A translation of the Sanskrit word "dharmakāya" (धर्म काय). One of the "three bodies" of a Buddha in Mahāyāna Buddhism. It may be seen as the essence of the whole of nature.

[2] 【直饒】 [zhí ráo]: "even if."

[3] 【有甚麼氣息】 [yǒu shén me qì xī]: An idiomatic expression that means here "to say that one has no flaws." (See 安谷白雲。《從容録新装版：禅の心髄》。東京：春秋社, 2008. Page 68: 「気息とは、ここではキズということだ。」).

【日】

舉す。雲門大師云く、「光り透脱せざれば兩般の病有り。一切處明ならず面前物ある、是れ一つ。一切の法空を透得するも隱隱地に箇の物有るに似て相似たり。亦是れ光透脱せざるなり。又法身にも亦兩般の病あり。法身に到ることを得るも法執忘ぜず、己見猶お存するが爲に法身邊に墮在す、是れ一つ。直饒透得するも放過せば即ち不可なり。子細に點檢し將ち來れば甚麼の氣息か有らんと云う、亦是れ病なり。」

【E】

Great Master Yunmen said, “When the light does not go through [a man], there are two diseases. Everywhere, there is no clarity, [even though] there are things before [this man]: this is one [disease]. Once it has penetrated and one has realized the emptiness of all things, somehow one feels as if there were still something there, showing that the light has not yet gone through. Moreover, there are also two diseases concerning the Dharma-body.[1] One has reached the Dharma-body, but remains attached to the Dharma, unable to forget this attachment, and keeping his own views. He therefore strays, remaining merely alongside the Dharma-body: this is one disease. If [the light] has gone through completely, one cannot simply let go. One will proceed with a careful examination, considering that he has no flaws:[2] this is also a disease.”

[1] “Dharma-body”: See note 1 of the Chinese text.

[2] “Considering that he has no flaws”: See note 3 in the Chinese text.

The penumbra of the morning twilight offers man an occasion to distinguish the things around him from one another, after the receding of the darkness of the night and the time of blindness associated with it. The uniformity of the obscurity of the night is then cleaved by minute rays of light, and one thing then slowly becomes opposed to another, or to its absence. These rays penetrate our eyes and infiltrate our minds to reveal to us the world in which we stand, what was already there during the last hours, but there is for now only a play of shadows, no clarity, no perception of the essence of these things.

As the sun lifts its countenance over the horizon, the world is then flooded with brilliance, our eyes soaked in perfect enlightenment. The clarity of this world increases until the shadows are chased away, almost completely, before colors fade into absolute radiance and forms are veiled in an impenetrable cloak of light. When all things are seen with perfect clarity, one realizes that such clarity is no different than utter darkness, as one sees nothing, and perceives that there is only no-thing. The light pervades one's being, and the great body of nature appears in its fullness, in its unicity, and in its emptiness. Light is all there is. One does not see the light, but he is also light itself. This is nonetheless not the end of his experience, the destination of his long journey. To see that all is no-thing-ness and to perceive the no-thing-ness in all things is indeed still to let something remain between him and the light: "no-thing-ness" itself, the last thing to which one is tempted to hold on.

When the light of being passes through us as we have let go of our own self, then there is no one left to think about "no-thing-ness," and this very idea vanishes into thin air. If we see "no-thing-ness" itself, we are still afflicted by the disease of the men of the world. We have climbed the high peak, but are now refusing to let it go. We still see a contrast between the world and no-thing-ness, and see "no-thing-ness" as a thing of the world, an idea occupying our mind. The light goes through when there is nothing that can resist its passage, not even the very idea of "no-thing-ness." When this ultimate idea is burned away by the light itself, this is when it becomes clear that there never was any sickness or health. There is no cure because there is no disease, and thus there is no one who is either sick or healthy. But if you think all of this is now understood, you are still afflicted by a disease.

Case 199 —Take a Step Further While on the Pole —竿頭進步

Source: The Gateless Barrier Case 46.

A more complete version can be found in the Book of Serenity, case

79.[156]

【中】

shí shuāng hé shàng yún bǎi chǐ gān tóu rú hé jìn bù yòu gǔ dé
石霜和尚云：「百尺竿頭如何進步。」又古德
yún bǎi chǐ gān tóu zuò di rén suī rán dé rù wèi wéi zhēn bǎi chǐ
云：「百尺竿頭坐底[1]人，雖然得入未為真；百尺
gān tóu xū jìn bù shí fāng shì jiè xiàn quán shēn
竿頭須進步，十方世界[2]現全身。」

[1] 【底】 [di]: Equivalent to the modern Chinese particle 的 .

[2] 【十方世界】 [shí fāng shì jiè]: "the worlds of the ten directions." The term "ten directions" 十方 [shí fāng] designates the four cardinal directions (north, south, east, and west), the four ordinal directions (northeast, southeast, southwest, and northwest), and the zenith and nadir. The expression "the worlds of the ten directions" here means "the entirety of the universe."

【日】

こ せき そう おしょう いわ ひゃくしゃくかんとう いかん
擧す。石霜和尚曰く、「百尺竿頭、如何が
ほ すす ま こ とくいわ ひゃくしゃくかんとう ざ
歩を進めん。」又た古德云く、「百尺竿頭に坐す
てい ひと とくにゅう いえど いま しん な
る底の人は、得入すと雖然も、未だ眞と爲さず。
ひゃくしゃくかんとう すべか ほ すす じっぽう せかい ぜんしん
百尺竿頭に須らく歩を進めて、十方世界に全身を
げん
現ずべし」と。

【E】

Shishuang said, "[Once] one is on the top of a hundred-foot pole, what should be done?"[1] [concerning this,] an ancient worthy [or: Gude] said, "Even though the one who sits on the top of a hundred-foot pole has begun to enter, he is not truly there. From the hundred-foot pole, one should take a step further and let one's body appear in the worlds of the ten directions."[2]

[156] See Book of Serenity, case 79: 「擧。長沙令僧問會和尚。未見南泉時如何會良久僧云。見後如何會云。不可別有也僧迴擧似沙沙云。百尺竿頭坐底人雖然得入未為真百尺竿頭須進步十方世界是全身僧云。百尺竿頭如何進步沙云。朗州山澧州水僧云。不會沙云。四海五湖王化裏。」

[1] "What should be done": The word used here can also mean "to progress" and "to step further." The different meanings are all intertwined here.

[2] "The ten directions of the world": See note 2 of the Chinese text.

The learned one of the world meticulously accumulates knowledge, appropriating vast storehouses of things built by others, so that he can climb the steps of its wisdom, reaching increasingly higher levels in its hierarchy, enlarging the horizon encompassed by his gaze and the reach of his body. There is yet no end to his ascent, as new things can always be envisioned, fabricated, and mastered, seemingly bringing him closer to the sky, and yet when he beholds the celestial vault, it appears no different than it was when he first opened up his eyes while standing on the bare earth down below, on the foundations of his world.

When the learned finally perceives the vacuity of his enterprise, seeing himself as a Sisyphus dragging new things to the top of the world without them fundamentally altering his horizon, his view of the truth of the earth and the sky, he may then realize that far from bringing him a revelation of the essence of all that is, of the ground of the skies, the things he holds on to and upon which he stands rather conceal what he seeks, and restrain his freedom. Letting them go one by one, he witnesses their fall into the bottomless depths, beyond the frontiers of his world. Column after column is toppled into oblivion, and sky-high heaps crumble, engulfed in the dark body of the earth itself, never to be seen again. This goes on and on, until his horizon is clear, and he is bathed in the brightness of the stars, contemplating the vast emptiness all around him, as he stands on the top of a narrow pillar reaching the loftiest clouds.

To reach the heights and to behold the clarity of the heavens once the world ceases to be a hindrance, a thick drapery veiling its beauty, is to be enlightened by celestial radiance, to contemplate the great emptiness that represents the ground of all that is. This formidable outlook upon nature, all the same, may appear to him to be an outcome of his ascent to the lofty heights. He may then grow more attached to this pillar than to any other of the things of the world that he willingly let go of. It becomes a beam stuck in his eye, but whose presence he does not notice, as he is focused on the speck in the eyes of those down below. Some may remain indefinitely on the top of this throne of the world, this enlightened height, forgetting about the woes of the world, the pains of those still on their way up, enjoying their solitary retreat in the vast emptiness of the sky, ignoring the last thing upon which they stand.

Someone whose eye is sufficiently open will, even so, realize his blindness to the last thing. He will feel the beam piercing his eye, even

if he cannot see it, and he will then decide to take the final step, letting go of the last thing, the pillar itself, understanding that it implies letting go of one's own life, one's own self, thoughtlessly hurling one's flesh and one's mind into the depths, the bottomless abyss where there is no-thing, so that he may enjoy the freedom of the winds, the liberty of the sky, able to attend to those lost inside the cluttered streets of the world below, embracing them like the winter breeze, waking them up and carrying them to the loftiest clouds and beyond, so that all may see the purity of the sky, the marvelous perfection of the vast empty expanse above and below, in every direction.[157]

Case 200 —Doushuài's Three Barriers —兜率三關

Source: The Gateless Barrier Case 47.

【中】

dōu shuài yuè hé shàng shè sān guān wèn xué zhě bō cǎo cān xuán
兜率悅 和尚設三關問學者：「撥[1] 草參玄[2] ，
zhǐ tú jiàn xìng jí jīn shàng rén xìng zài shén chù shí dé zì xìng
只圖[3] 見性，即今[4] 上人，性在甚處。識得自性，
fāng tuō shēng sǐ yǎn guāng luò shí zuò me shēng tuō tuō dé shēng sǐ biàn zhī
方脫生死，眼光落時，作麼生脫。脫得生死，便知
qù chù sì dà fēn lí xiàng shén chù qù
去處，四大分離，向甚處去。」

[1] 【撥】 S:【拨】 [bō]: "to push aside with a limb or an object" / "to wade through."

[2] 【參玄】 S:【参玄】 [cān xuán]: Literally, "to participate in the mystery," meaning "to engage in Zen practice."

[3] 【圖】 S:【图】 [tú]: "to intend" / "to seek."

[4] 【即今】 [jí jīn]: "now."

【日】

こ と そつ えつ おしょう さん かん もう がくしゃ
擧す。兜率悅和尚、三關を設けて學者に
と はっそうさんげん た けんしょう はか そっこんしょうにん
問う、「撥草參玄は只だ見性を圖る。即今上人の

[157] See Wumen's verse on this case: "Making the eye on the forehead blind, one clings to the mark on the scale; Throwing away body and life, one blind person leads many blind people." Translation from: Yamada, Kou'un, *Mumonkan (Gateless Gate)* [Unpublished manuscript]. Chinese original: 「瞎却頂門眼錯認定盤星拚身能捨命一盲引眾盲」, From: 《禪宗無門關》。 CBETA (Case 46).

性、甚れの處にか在る。」「自性を識得すれば方に生死を脱す、眼光落つる時作麼生か脱せん。」「生死を脱得すれば便ち去處を知る、四大分離して甚れの處に向ってか去る。」

【E】

Doushuai set up three barriers and asked some students: “Wading through the tall grasses to participate in the mystery [of Zen practice], the only goal is to see one’s own [true] nature. Those coming up here now, [tell me] where is this [true] nature? When one has realized his own [true] nature, he is then free from birth and death. When the light going through one’s eyes is dimmed [and one’s flesh decays], how will he free himself? If one frees himself from birth and death, he should know where he goes. [His body] decomposes into the four elements. Where is he going?”

The novice wades through the tall grasses to participate in the mystery that occurs in the mountains where those seeking to know themselves congregate and support each other on the path. This path is nonetheless one without a beginning or end. It has no borders or center, and each step that is taken is in the right direction. There is only a single gate leading up to it: the one that is here and now, right in front of us. When a novice passes through this gate and perceives the nature of the path, he may see that he himself is one with it. He is the tall grasses as well as the tallest trees enthroned upon the peak. The only hindrance to his liberation is the illusion that he is a subject contemplating objects around him, and this illusion begins to be dispelled when the subject also becomes an object, when one examines his own nature in contrast to the rest of the things surrounding him. He may then notice how such contrast is itself the fruit of his mind, painted with the brush of his reason. Each blade of grass grows while collecting the rays of the radiant star above the earth, and then withers as its decomposed substance becomes the ground out of which another will soon sprout, with the grassland remaining intact, passing through time as a whole, sharing roots and soil, fed with the same celestial brilliance. When man sees that he is a blade of grass, that he is the grassland, the earth, and the sky, he

then sees that the line between life and death is as illusory as the one between the self and the other. His flesh may rot and be absorbed by the earth, but it remains the same in its essence, and it will be part of generations upon generations of new living beings. He will be the grass of the morrow, the seeds of the next winter, the birds of another year, the men of a future civilization, up until the sky itself is folded back into the tiniest spark or dissolved in emptiness.

One who sees his own nature will therefore feel no anguish when considering the day when the light going through his eyes will be dimmed and his flesh decay. He is free, because he is free of his self, which is what constrained him and caused him to fear the dusk of his existence, not realizing that another dawn soon comes, and that the heavenly brilliance may be veiled for a little while, but that it always emerges back out of the horizon, and never ceased to be. The way he will take is clear. He will be the soil and the winds, the rain and what sprouts from the ground. He will remain here and be there. There will be no place where he is not. He is no-thing and every thing, nowhere and everywhere, now and forever, having realized that being is indivisible, a compact whole borne upon the way of the sky, one that is not even perceivable as a thing, or as no-thing. It simply is.

Case 201 —Shoushan's Three Phrases —首山三句

Source: The Book of Serenity Case 76.

【中】

jǔ shǒu shān shì zhòng yún dì yī jù jiàn dé yǔ fó zǔ wéi
舉。首山 示眾云：「第一句薦[1] 得，與佛祖為
shī dì èr jù jiàn dé yǔ rén tiān wéi shī dì sān jù jiàn dé zì jiù
師。第二句薦得，與人天為師。第三句薦得，自救
bù liǎo sēng yún hé shàng shì dì jǐ jù jiàn dé shān yún yuè
不了。」僧云：「和尚是第幾句薦得。」山 云：「月
luò sān gēng chuān shì guò
落三更[2] 穿市過。」

[1] 【薦】 [jiàn]: "to attain" / "to reach."

[2] 【三更】 [sān gēng]: "the third of the five night watch periods," that is, around the middle of the night.

【日】

こ しゅざんしゅ しめ いわ だい いっく せんとく
舉す。首山衆に示して云く、「第一句に薦得す

ぶっそ　ため　し　な　だいに　く　せんとく　にん
れば佛祖の與に師と爲る、第二句に薦得すれば人
でん　ため　し　な　だいさん　く　せんとく　じぐふ
天の與に師と爲る、第三句に薦得すれば自救不
りょう　そういわ　おしょう　こ　だいいっく　せんとく
了。」僧云く、「和尚は是れ第幾句に薦得するや。」
さんいわ　つきおち　さんこう　いち　うが　す
山云く、「月落て三更、市を穿って過ぐ。」

【E】

Shoushan instructed the congregation and said, “If one attains the first verse, he will be a teacher of buddhas and patriarchs. If one attains the second verse, he will be a teacher of the heavens and mankind. If one attains the third verse, he won’t be able to save even himself.” A monk asked: “Which verse did the Master attain?” Shoushan said, “The moon is set and, at midnight, I walk through the city.”

The learned teacher beholds the world from its highest point and considers himself as enjoying the best possible view of it. He remains in the cloudy heights and instructs those reigning over this world, who have long deserted the earth and who remain as the dust blown over it by the winds, and the clouds themselves. To teach is to be convinced that one knows, and therefore the teacher stands the farthest from the way of the sky. The one teaching both the heavenly ones and the kings of the earth stands in the loftiest palaces, but he is the lowest of the low, the shameless and proud, blinded by the delusions he diligently cultivates day after day and scatters to the four corners of the world through his mouth and his pen.

The humble teacher nonetheless does not dwell forever among the loftiest clouds. One day, he hastily descends from the heights to roam through the bright but grimy streets of the world and to mingle with the commoners, the men of the world. There, he unites the heavens and the world, seeing them as a single thing, seeing the heavenly nature of the world and the worldly nature of the heavens, blurring the horizon, with the tall glass structures built by the hands of men who stand like pristine mirrors blending perfectly with the azure dome and the cottony clouds, almost indistinguishable from them. His voice resounds through the alleys and the marketplace, and runs to the heights as well as into the depths, and he preaches to both heaven and mankind concerning this

revelation, ceasing to discern them, treating them not only as equals but as identical.

The teacher of the heavens and mankind may nonetheless at one point see through his own words and perceive their vacuity. He may see his preaching as vain, and his writings as deceitful. More importantly, this may cause him to doubt his own position, and the validity of his work. He cannot save others, and he cannot even save himself, but the unsettling revelation is soon replaced by contentment. Indeed, the source of all illusions now appears crystal-clear. The spring of deceit does not stand before him, but he is this spring, which he promptly covers with the earth and fills with the sky. Where there is no knowledge, there is no teacher. Where there is no self, there is neither savior nor anyone to save. When the sun and the moon have set, and the streets are enshrouded with shadows, one may roam throughout the city, without distinguishing anything. Everything is at its place, as it was at noon, with the gilded star profusely pouring out its blazing rays over the earth, but now there is only no-thing to be seen, and when one has let this darkness pervade one's being, there is no one left there. The streets are empty, perfectly pure and clear, and there is no longer any teacher or student; even numbers are forgotten, revealed to be mere reflections of no-thing-ness.

Case 202 —Sitting Alone on the Great Hero Peak —獨坐大雄峰

Source: The Blue Cliff Record Case 26.

【中】

jǔ sēng wèn bǎi zhàng rú hé shì qí tè shì zhàng yún dú
舉。僧問百丈：「如何是奇特事。」丈云：「獨
zuò dà xióng fēng sēng lǐ bài zhàng biàn dǎ
坐大雄峯[1]。」僧禮拜，丈便打。

[1]【大雄峯】[dà xióng fēng]: "the Great Hero Peak," that is, the place where Baizhang's monastery was located.

【日】

こ そう ひゃくじょう と いか こ きとく
舉す。僧、百丈に問う、「如何なるか是れ奇特の
じ じょういわ ひと たいゆうほう ざ そう らいはい
事。」丈云く、「獨り大雄峰に坐す。」僧、禮拜す。
じょう すなわ う
丈、便ち打つ。

【E】

A monk asked Baizhang: "What is something extraordinary?" Baizhang said, "Sitting alone on the Great Hero Peak!"[1] The monk made a deep bow. Baizhang then hit him.

[1] "Great Hero Peak": See note 1 of the Chinese text.

When the extraordinary becomes familiar, it surreptitiously turns into the ordinary, and conversely, when the familiarity with the ordinary is suddenly broken, and one sees it in a new light, it may finally reveal its extraordinary nature. For the man engulfed daily in the affairs of the world, among throngs of people running through its labyrinthine alleys, to find oneself sitting alone on a mountain peak may be a unique experience, while the mountain hermit living the same experience each day may, on the contrary, be dazzled by the visit of the most ordinary man, and be touched by the most inept question.

There is nonetheless a crucial difference between a man of the way and one of the world, as the former does not need to climb to a solitary peak to free himself from the smothering presence of the ten thousand things of the world, preventing the perception of the extraordinariness of the ordinary. He is the great mountain whose basis encompasses the entire earth. He alone is honored above and below the heavens, but he is also no one, having seen that he is the earth and the sky. The visitor who approaches him is now alone on the great mountain, sitting upon it and contemplating its infinite nature, the horizon of being itself, but he does not realize it. He sees the mountain in the form of a man, addressing it as if it belonged to the world, whereas it is the earth itself.

The unrefined visitor thus attempts to honor his host, bowing deeply toward him, but only receives a blow of a stick as his reward for his humility, plunging him into uncertainty and leaving him to reflect upon his predicament. This blow may nonetheless be like a rock tumbling down a mountain and hitting a tree below, a natural occurrence, without purpose or meaning. It may also be seen as a rebuke, as the visitor failed to see the mountain and instead bowed toward the man, whereas his all-encompassing nature would imply that he should have bowed toward the east and the west, the north and the south, toward the heavens and toward the earth, and he would then have paid his respect in an appropriate manner.

To see only the man is to be deluded. To see only the great mountain

is to lack compassion for the inhabitants of the world. To see both the man and the great mountain is to fall into the trap of attempting to cleave what is an indivisible whole. This may be the purpose of the blow inflicted on the visitor: it is meant to be the final dot closing all arguments, the broom that sweeps away all the dust covering the earth, the fire burning down to ashes all the things occupying the mind, leaving nothing in their stead.[158] Then, one stops wondering about rebukes and rewards, the ordinary and the extraordinary, the mountain and the world, as even the separation between the host and the visitor fades away, and nothing is left standing, everything has been leveled, and only clarity remains.

Case 203 —Zhaozhou's Four Doors —趙州四門

Source: The Blue Cliff Record Case 9.

【中】

jǔ sēng wèn zhào zhōu rú hé shì zhào zhōu zhōu yún dōng mén xī mén nán mén běi mén
舉。僧問趙州[1]：「如何是趙州」州云：「東門，西門，南門，北門。」

[1] 【趙州】S:【赵州】[zhào zhōu]: The name of the master comes from the name of the city of Zhaozhou, in the vicinity of which he taught. It is located in what is now Hebei province (河北省).

【日】

こ そう じょうしゅう と いか こ じょうしゅう しゅうしゅうわ とうもん さいもん なんもん きたもん
舉す。僧、趙州に問う、「如何なるか是れ趙州。」州云く、「東門、西門、南門、北門。」

【E】

[158] See: Yamada, Kou'un, *Hekiganroku (Blue Cliff Record)* [Unpublished manuscript]: "Why did Baizhang hit the monk? Some people interpret the action as meaning, 'Not yet good enough!' Others interpret it to mean, 'That bow is wonderful.' Or it may have been a blow to wipe out all things, to conclude the entire koan." Original Japanese: 「どこを、なぜ打ったのか。『まだ、いかん』と打たれたのか、『その拝すばらしいぞ』と打たれたのか、その辺は人によってそれぞれに見られる。あるいは一切をお掃除するという意味で打たれたのかも知れない。そうだとすると公案円成ということになる訳だが、これ等はそれぞれの人の力量で見るほかはない。」From: 山田耕雲。《碧岩集提唱山田耕雲》。[Unpublished manuscript].

A monk asked Zhaozhou: "What is Zhaozhou?"[1] Zhaozhou said, "The east gate, the west gate, the south gate, the north gate."

[1] "Zhaozhou": See note 1 of the Chinese text.

A man resembles a citadel, with high walls separating what is inside it from the outside, the open country, where there are no boundaries. A series of gates, however, allow exchanges between the citadel and what lies beyond its walls, which can be closed at will, and these gates allow its ruler to keep control over what goes in and out of it. In the case of man, his senses likewise allow impressions to be left upon his mind by his surroundings and enable him to express himself and leave his mark upon the world around him.

When the gates are shut during the night, the inhabitants of the citadel then feel safe, protected by the robustness of its walls, knowing that it remains impregnable and that the dangers of the open land cannot reach them while they are sound asleep.[159] This safety yet comes at a price. They are protected, but also severed from the riches and wonders found together with the threats and dangers lurking beyond the walls. The citadel thus opens itself up at dawn, when what threatens it can be discerned from what may be to its benefit. It is itself defined by this control exerted upon exchanges, seeing the inside wall as the locus of civilization, as opposed to the lawless open land, where men are akin to beasts. The same can be said of man himself, whose mind is the locus of his reason and his world, built across the ages by his ancestors and handed over to him as a legacy. Outside of his mind, there is only the raw nature of the earth and the skies, the branches of the tree of life that allow themselves to be shaped by the land, without the use of reason, without submitting the flux of their senses to their capacity to reflect upon things.

Man is thus proud of his civilization, of his world, and he cherishes its high walls and narrow gates. Open to the east, the west, the north, and the south, he, even so, fails to pay attention to what is above and below, to the heavens and the earth. His senses are turned toward the horizon, toward what stands between earth and sky, that is, life and

[159] See: Roloff, Dietrich. *Bi-Yan-Lu: Aufzeichnungen vor smaragdener Felswand - Die 100 Kôan des Hekiganroku.* Windpferd Verlagsgesellschaft mbH, 2013. Page 114 (Case 9): "Für die Einwohner bedeutete ein offenes Tor Ausgang ins Freie, die Möglichkeit zum Aufbruch in die Weite ringsherum. Und ein geschlossenes Tor bedeutete Sicherheit, Schutz vor Räubern und Feinden, Schutz gegen das Andringen von Gefahr."

man's world, and seldom does he take time to behold the celestial vault or plunge his bare hands into the fertile ground to experience its nature. If he does so, he may for all that become aware of the weakness of his world, of the inanity of living a life protected from the truth of the open land, severed from contact with nature. Once he loses the will to hold on to the bricks forming the walls and to the iron plates forming the gates, these immediately collapse to the ground. Then, the opposition between the inside and the outside ceases to exist. The citadel becomes a ruin, a monument of a fallen world, while the winds conquer its streets, and its inhabitants discover the fullness of earth and sky. One who lets himself be transformed by the open land, by direct contact with the earth and the sky, then ceases to be a man, and rather becomes the wind itself, a celestial force, passing through the ruins of the citadel as well as sweeping the great desert around it. Then, there is no barbarian or civilized man. There is only the earth and the sky, with eyes everywhere to observe them, which are yet themselves nowhere to be seen.

Case 204 —Caoshan's Fulfilment of Filial Piety —曹山孝滿

Source: The Book of Serenity Case 73.

【中】

jǔ sēng wèn cáo shān líng yī bú guà shí rú hé shān
舉。僧問曹山：「靈衣不掛[1] 時如何。」山
yún cáo shān jīn rì xiào mǎn sēng yún xiào mǎn hòu rú hé shān
云：「曹山 今日孝滿。」僧云：「孝滿後如何。」山
yún cáo shān ài diān jiǔ
云：「曹山 愛顛酒[2] 。」

[1] 【靈衣不掛】 [líng yī bú guà]: Literally "not hanging one's mourning clothes." Here, it means "to leave off one's mourning clothes."

[2] 【顛酒】 S:【颠酒】 [diān jiǔ]: "to get really drunk."

【日】

こ そう そうさん と れい い か とき いかん
舉す。僧、曹山に問う、「靈衣掛けざる時如何。」
さんいわ そうさんこんにちこうまん そういわ こうまん のち
山云く、「曹山今日孝滿。」僧云く、「孝滿の後
いかん さんいわ そうさんてんしゅ あい
如何。」山云く、「曹山顛酒を愛す。」

【E】

A monk asked Caoshan: "When one leaves off his mourning clothes, what then?" Caoshan said, "Today, Caoshan has fulfilled filial piety." The monk said, "When one has fulfilled piety, what then?" Caoshan said, "Caoshan loves to get drunk."

The world into which we are thrown at birth nurtures our growth, as we let ourselves be shaped by it, diligently following its guidance, patiently obeying its rules, submitting ourselves to its order so that we may enjoy the privileges it offers to its inhabitants, who rule over every other branch of the tree of life. When a young man is fully grown into an adult, having appropriated this world to his benefit, he may nonetheless grow increasingly rebellious to the idea of letting himself be constrained by its rigid structures and its unjust hierarchies. He observes the nature of this world, made of a complex web of oppositions and contrasts between things: the parent versus the children, the living versus the dead, the obedient versus the rebellious. When he is struck by the realization that these oppositions are products of this world built by the minds of the men that came before him, he then sees that the fears and worries afflicting him daily are not warranted. They indeed represent the order of the world, but not the order of the underlying realms, the earth and the skies, the place where all is one, where no contrast remains, and there is only absolute truth and perfect clarity. For long years, he wore the mourning clothes of the world, symbols of his submission to its order, of his recognition of the opposition between life and death, parent and child, but these now feel as heavy as they are cumbersome. They weigh him down and constrain his movement. More than this, they now appear laughable, the garments of a clown, and thus are suddenly taken off and left upon the ground when he is struck by this realization.

Freedom is then enjoyed, as filial piety has been fulfilled. Death is no longer feared but embraced, as life itself is left behind. Children are no more, and it is as if there had never been any parents. The order of his world collapses, as all the oppositions keeping it together fade away. Standing free, but among ruins, there is only one question left for him: what then? Naked, experiencing for the first time the freshness of the heavenly zephyr upon his bare skin, oneness with the all-encompassing skies, he is unwilling to wear something else, even the golden robe of the heavenly ones.[160] With all worries and constraints behind him, he no longer fears the ingestion of the strongest poison, the transgression of the commandments. He delves headlong into the sea of

[160]See: 神保如天. 《從容録通解》。東京：無我山房, 1915. Page 471 (Case 73).

wine that surrounds him, letting inebriation seize his mind and guide his heart. With drunkenness, the last barriers suddenly crumble. His vision becomes blurred, as his senses are speaking to him more loudly than ever, but without clarity or coherence. The things around him all appear as one giant, indistinct object, as the line separating what thinks from what is thought about becomes increasingly hard to discern. He no longer seeks freedom, or truth. He simply lets himself be carried upon the way of the sky, having abandoned all desire, having ceased to hold on to any thing, letting the waves of wine transport him wherever they go.

Case 205 —Who Is He? —他是阿誰

Source: The Gateless Barrier Case 45.

【中】

dōng shān yǎn shī zǔ yuē shì jiā mí lè yóu shì
東山演師 祖[1] 曰：「釋迦[2]，彌勒[3] 猶是
tā nú qiě dào tā shì ā shuí
他奴，且道：他是阿誰[4]。」

[1] 【祖】 [zǔ]: “[spiritual] forefather” / “[spiritual] ancestor.”

[2] 【釋迦】 S:【释迦】 [shì jiā]: An abbreviation of 釋迦牟尼 [shì jiā móu ní], Śākyamuni Buddha.

[3] 【彌勒】 S:【弥勒】 [mí lè]: Maitreya (मैत्रेय), the future Buddha, who is to come after Śākyamuni Buddha

[4] 【阿誰】 S:【阿谁】 [ā shuí]: “who.”

【日】

こ とうざんえんし そいわ しゃか みろく な こ
擧す。東山演師祖曰く、「釋迦彌勒は猶お是れ
た ぬ しば い た こ あた
他の奴。且らく道え、他は是れ阿誰ぞ。」

【E】

Yan of Dongshan, [our] grand-master, said, “Shakya [the Buddha of the present era] and Maitreya [the Buddha of the future era] are both his servants. Who is he?”

There comes a point when all questions become futile and are heard as the most obnoxious noise, when every word is like a mud ball thrown onto an immense carpet made of the finest white silk. This is when one may discover that by opening wide the gates of his senses, the noise may fade away, having nowhere to reverberate. When one stops to play with the mud, the winds dry and sweep away its stains. When one ceases to reminisce about the past and envision the future, then the present can finally appear, and reveal itself to be all that there is. This is when the mask may fall, and one's true face may finally be seen.

When the past collapses into the future, and the heavenly ones fall to the earth, the truth of being is then experienced as pure presence. The faces become one, and the earthly can no longer be distinguished from the heavenly. The wise are akin to the fool, and the fool to the wise. Man's progress on the path then becomes meaningless, as he realizes that there is no one there, and that there is not even a path. There is nowhere to reach, no track to follow, only the way of the sky itself, which is everywhere, just waiting to be seen and embraced, once he lets go of the delusion causing him to believe that he stands outside of it. The ec-stasy of selfhood, the sweet illusion of observing the world as a subject in front of countless objects, can then give way to the bliss of selflessness, the truth of one's dissolution into the sky, which always was the essence of one's being. Then, there are no more subjects and objects, no servants and no one to be served. The constellation of eyes scattered across the earth then gently vanishes, while the heavens reveal themselves to be the eye of being, the seer merged with what is seen, the mirror sphere observing itself, seeing that there is no-thing there at all.

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